Raging Goblins Steal Magic Sword Page 66

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November/December 2000
Issue #83

Where does one go from a world of insanity?
Somewhere on the other side of despair.
—T. S. Eliot
The Family Reunion, II:2

We are all born mad. Some remain so.
—Samuel Beckett
Waiting for Godot

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Cover

Marc Sasso paints a chilling portrait of Pym, a demented resident of the Raker Asylum in "Deep Freeze."

Dungeons To Die For

Every Dungeon Needs Personality

by Christopher Perkins

Some of the most memorable adventures written for the D&D game have revolved around dungeons. I'm reminded not just of "old classics" like *Tomb of Horrors* and *The Temple of Elemental Evil* but *DUNGEON Magazine* classics like "Ex Libris" (Issue #29) and "The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" (Issue #37) and new classics like *The Sunless Citadel* and *Forge of Fury*. Those of us who've been playing the game for years have learned to admire the most carefully crafted dungeons as deadly works of art.

Creating a legendary dungeon isn't easy; the new *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* dedicates entire chapters to this pursuit. For my Wednesday night campaign, I've drawn inspiration from dozens of *DUNGEON* adventures as well as the twisted imaginings of designers like Bruce R. Cordell, Sean Reynolds, Rich Baker, and Monte Cook. Here are three quick, useful tips that I've gleaned from my "research."

Use recurring images and motifs. Make your dungeon more than a randomized conglomeration of corridors and chambers by reflecting the personal tastes (or disturbing nightmares) of the dungeon's "architect." Early in my Wednesday campaign, the party explored the tomb of Scalira Kallaster, the former leader of an assassins' guild. Scalira loved cats and surrounded herself with assassins who were catlike predators. The prevalence of cat frescoes, statues, waterspouts, mosaics, and ornaments in her tomb added to the dungeon's "personality" and gave the PCs greater insight into Scalira's character. (Granted, little could prepare them for Scalira's mummy or the screaming, mummified cat that crawled out of her chest cavity!)

Challenge the players as well as their characters. Look for ways to make the players flex their creativity and use abilities that their characters might typically ignore. I'm reminded of the night my Wednesday group explored an abandoned monastery. They encountered some former denizens who had been turned into zombies. To make the zombies tougher, I outfitted them with wooden masks adorned with *glyphs of warding* that triggered whenever a living creature approached within 5 feet. Upon learning the true nature of the runes, the PCs had to quickly change their tactics. The occasion afforded Herumann (an intrepid gnome rogue played magnificently by Stan!) the chance to make clever use of his *prestidigitation* ability, as he magically removed the wooden mask from one zombie's head, thus neutralizing the threat of the *glyph.*

Make the ordinary extraordinary. Sometimes a statue is just a statue, but providing a bit of description can add character to mundane things like statues, doors, floors, walls, torch holders, and treasure chests. Also look for occasions to tinker with towns and landscapes. For one Wednesday night session, I created a city of gigantic, hollowed-out mushroom "towers." Not long after their arrival, the PCs were pitted against a vampiric creature named Sajka Molostroi. After defeating Sajka in her fungal spire, the PCs found a small crystal paperweight carved with the likeness of a bat. The item, though nonmagical, was interesting enough to catch Herumann's eye and made a fine souvenir of the battle.

I promise that these simple tricks will make your dungeons more intriguing (if not inviting), both to your players and to magazine editors who could use a few cool adventures (*hint, hint*). And let us know what other tricks you've used to make your dungeons distinctive.

Chris Perkins

Dungeon®

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Letters
Raves and Rants

Tell us what you think of the adventures in this issue. Write to "Letters," DUNGEON Magazine, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055 or email us at dungeon@wizards.com.

Why DUNGEON Rocks!

Reading the letters sent in by readers of *DUNGEON Magazine*, it seems that motivating players with the right adventure hook for a specific adventure is a challenge for many DMs. Linking adventures together and fitting them into a campaign can also be a bit difficult. I have struggled with these problems, and I've come up with a few solutions that might help others.

First, don't wait until presenting the current adventure to come up with a way to hook your players. Lay some sort of foundation for motivating the characters when you first create the campaign. A requirement for some sort of mentoring or training for the PCs to advance in their chosen classes is one example. If a character must study with a mentor at an academy or with a college between adventures, this provides readily available NPCs who can give PCs reasons to go off on adventures. An arch-wizard, high cleric, or bard could have plenty of good reasons to want an artifact or item from a tomb, castle ruins, or lost temple. Even a PC without ethics or morals usually realizes the benefit of "sucking up" to someone with power or authority. Besides, there is nothing to stop a DM from having these NPCs offer financial rewards in exchange for services rendered by the PCs. If you feel such requests are heavy-handed and manipulative, you can always use the lowly peers or fellow students of the PCs to come up with some wild scheme or hear some strange rumor to present adventure hooks.

If you add the requirement of sponsorship to these training facilities, you can provide your beginning PCs with reasons to perform some impressive deed for a person of influence in the campaign. Perhaps military training for fighters is only available through the local duke or baron, or at the very least, it requires his sponsorship to be admitted to the local fighter's academy. (Actually, a noble could probably help a PC get into many types of training situations.) If your PCs form an association with the local authority figure, it is reasonable that she might ask the PCs to investigate the complaints or troubles of a small town or village that is under her protection. Smart characters, regardless of alignment, usually realize that it is never a bad idea to earn the good graces of people in power or to have their gratitude or respect.

Another way to be prepared for tempting PCs into future adventures is to actively participate in the creation of a character's background history. Flesh out a player's concept of his character's background with details from your campaign that can later be used to lure them into adventures. The mysterious disappearance of a relative, the theft of a family heirloom, or the destruction of their home town are just a few examples of the more mundane and common character hooks, but the possibilities are endless.

These particular examples might not serve all campaigns, but a DM who takes the time to consider how the culture, laws, and common practices of his world might be used as an aid in motivating PCs is way ahead of the game.

With regard to linking adventures together and making them fit my own world, I decided to try something different in my latest campaign. Instead of creating my world and its maps and then searching my 60+ issues of *DUNGEON Magazine* for scenarios that would fit, I took my magazines and used them as the basis to create my campaign world. Admittedly, this took quite a bit of time, but I found the effort worthwhile for several reasons. The most obvious benefit is

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that fitting any published adventure into my campaign takes a lot less effort now. I still change and adjust many details to fit my style and taste in a fantasy game, but most of these changes are not things that are directly revealed to the PCs during the course of the adventure anyway, so it has no impact on a gaming session. It was also necessary to combine and consolidate some of the adventure cities and towns to limit the size of my world, but most of the general information such as geography, NPCs, creatures, and so forth can be used just as they are presented.

The other advantage of designing my campaign this way is that I don't have to run my game in lock-step or linear style that involves the manipulation and heavy-handed guidance of players. I still create my own adventures, but now my players have numerous options when choosing where to go and what to do. Their destiny is in their hands rather than being dictated by the adventure I have ready for them.

Another bonus for making *Dungeon Magazine* the foundation of my campaign is that it helps find ways to move players from one adventure to another. With all the adventures threaded together to create my campaign world, it's a snap to provide links and clues in one adventure that lead to another. And, oh yeah, I almost forgot—the adventures are pretty decent, too.

Kat Cox
Huntington Beach, CA
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THE OLD DUNGEON MAGAZINE WAS SUCH A WONDERFUL PUBLICATION. THE TRANSFORMATION IS REALLY A PITY.

Why Dungeon Sucks!

I abhor Issue #82. Some reasons follow:

1. The cover is ugly and poorly done. Nearly every other cover of *Dungeon Magazine* for over the past two years has been far better than this one.

2. Just about every color painting in the magazine is really ugly and poor work. The black-and-white pictures in the previous issues of *Dungeon Magazine* were much better.

3. It is much more difficult, and tiring on the eyes, to read text with the marbled or other graphic-laden background.

4. The font is ugly and hard to read. Previously, *Dungeon Magazine* had THE most pleasant font to read of any periodical (gaming or otherwise) that I have ever seen.

5. Such a range of colors in sidebars made my head ache after just reading through the magazine for 10 minutes.

In short, I dread the next issue. I regret having a subscription that will not expire until Fall 2002. I will look through the next issue or two to see whether the magazine has returned to its previous format, but if they have not, each issue will go straight from the mailbox to my shelf, and I will let my subscription expire when it ends. I'm sure the magazine staff had good intentions and tried to make the magazine better, but sometimes "more" is not better, and the issue I have before me is a gaudy example of more not being better.

The old *Dungeon Magazine* was such a wonderful publication. The transformation is really a pity.

Jean-Philippe Suter
Randolph, NJ

Our designers took chances when creating the new "look" for the magazine. So far—and to no one's surprise—the feedback has been mixed. I personally believe that trying to please every reader is a recipe for failure; however, we will continue to hone the new look to make each issue more "user friendly" and more appealing to the newsstand buyer.

"Race" Ranks High

I am a huge fan of *Dungeon Magazine*. Not only do I enjoy the modules but I like being able to use a single module to create an entire campaign. In Issue #81, you provided me with just such an opportunity with Kent Ertman's "A Race Against Time," which has recurring good guys and bad guys as well as people in between. Here's a working town with a future that depends on the actions of the PCs. All in all, "A Race Against Time" ranks up there with some of my other favorite *Dungeon Magazine* adventures like "Forgotten Man" (Issue #75) and "Jigsaw" (Issue #61). I liked this module so much that I'm going to convert it and use it to introduce my 3rd Edition campaign. Thanks for the quality!

Joe Averbach
Sandusky, OH

Here are the new D&D statistics for the major NPCs in "A Race Against Time." This should make converting the module easier:

Bruiser Holloway, Male Human Ftr5: CR 5; Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 10 in. tall); HD 5d10+15; hp 49; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk +8 melee (1d8+3/crit 19-20, longsword), +6 ranged (no weapon); AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 14.

Skills: Climb +5, Escape Artist +2, Handle Animal +5, Jump +5, Ride +5, Swim +6. *Feats:* Dodge, Mobility, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Ride-By Attack.

Possessions: Longsword, dagger.

Gecko, Male Human Rog6: CR 6; Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 6d6+12; hp 32; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+4 *bracers of armor*, +4 Dex); Atk +8 melee (1d6+1/crit 19-20, short sword with Weapon Finesse feat), +8 ranged (1d4+1/crit 19-20, masterwork dagger); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked); AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills: Appraise +5, Balance +7, Bluff +7, Climb +4, Disable Device +9, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +10, Gather Information +7, Hide +10, Intimidate +4, Jump +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +7, Pick Pocket +8, Search +5, Sense Motive +3, Spot +3, Swim +4, Tumble +10, Use Magic Device +4, Use Rope +7. *Feats:* Expertise, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Weapon Finesse (short sword).

Possessions: +4 bracers of armor, short sword, four masterwork daggers (balanced for throwing).

Evelyn, Female Human Sor4: CR 4; Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 4d4+4; hp 13; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +1 melee (1d4-1/crit 19-20, dagger), +4 ranged (no weapon); AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +8 (includes Iron Will feat); Str 9, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Skills: Concentration +9, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Listen +5, Scry +6, Spellcraft +10, Spot +4. *Feats:* Brew Potion, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll.

Spells (6/7/4 per day, chosen from the following list): 0—*daze, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, read magic;*

1st—*charm person, expeditious retreat, sleep;* 2nd—*invisibility.*

Possessions: Dagger, *potion of invisibility,* 3 scrolls of *ventriloquism,* 3 scrolls of *clairaudience/clairvoyance.*

Deconstructing Issue #82

G'day Chris! I write to critique some of the changes to *Dungeon Magazine.* Who am I? I've been a D&D game fan for over 13 years—my first treasured issue is Issue #7, and I've been hooked ever since. Today, I still read each issue I receive cover-to-cover and plan to continue my subscription for the foreseeable future. It's my favorite magazine, and I await each issue with anticipation.

Notwithstanding, I want you to know my concerns. In this age of exceptional computer graphics capabilities, it is tempting to let the technology run for technology's sake. In the case of the recent graphic upgrades to *Dungeon Magazine,* this comes at a cost to readability and attractiveness.

To be specific, first consider the print: Please compare page 32 of Issue #82 to, say, page 22 in Issue #44. There's no argument that the graphics are electrifying in this months' issue, but frankly, my eyes are overwhelmed and I find it difficult to sit back and leisurely read that page. Certainly I cannot scan it for specific facts if I'm playing the module. The mottled red/black background, white letters, and blotchy background to the white page are disconcerting. Finally, while I fully respect copyrights, I sometimes photocopy pages when I use them in dungeons to mark them up and make notes as we play. This format is difficult to photocopy.

Now look again at page 22, Issue #44. Certainly no prize winner for graphics, but I can read it. I can quickly scan the page for the wild dogs' statistics or the looters. It is a pleasant read. To me, I'd rather not pay to make a magazine less attractive. Note, this page is just an example. I find the whole publication difficult to leisurely read.

YOU'VE MADE OUTSTANDING ADVANCES WITH THE ARTWORK IN ISSUE #82 ... I LIKE IT. I APPLAUD IT. I WANT IT.

Now comments on the maps. Tremendous advances. Look at page 33 in Issue #82. Compare the Osterhaus to Holbin House on page 32 of Issue #7. Tremendous detail and easy to read. A caution, though minor: Look at the map on page 89 of Issue #82. A one-room cottage with mounds of detail and complex colors. Awful lot of detail for one room. Are the bells and whistles really worth that much? To some degree I cry a profound "Yes!" but please look at it case-by-case.

You've made outstanding advances with the artwork in Issue #82. When you compare the hunchback Plygar on page 91 to some of the old pen-and-inks, you can see the monumental leaps in quality. I like it. I applaud it. I want it. I also like pen-and-inks, however. The one on page 20 of Issue #37 is an example of a fine, simple, expressive pen-and-ink drawing. In the same issue, the stone face pictures from page 56 to 68 are also well done, expressive, and match well graphically.

An all-color *Dungeon Magazine* is a great graphical achievement, but is it worth it? Many of the maps can be reduced to black-and-white or grayscale with no loss of detail/attractiveness. Would it cost as much? Would it be more attractive? I believe the answers are respectively no and yes.

I understand you've received a lot of applause for your graphical innovations. You might not want to take a step backward. I suggest striking a balance that makes your great magazine an even more readable and attractive periodical.

I love Nodwick, by the way. Kudos to Aaron Williams. I also applaud the "back to the dungeon" focus of the 3rd Edition. I'm an old DM from the late 70's and can't stand to lose a party blocks away from the action simply because they want to role-play an encounter with some pointless NPC.

Tom Glardon
Prattville, AL

Thanks for the insightful criticism, Tom. We hope that the graphical presentation continues to improve with every issue.

Fewer Pix, More Maps

Well, I'm sure you'll be expecting mail regarding the new look of *Dungeon Magazine,* so here's one of many.

I'm quite pleased about the additional pages, and combined with a fairly small-sized font, the length of *Dungeon Magazine* is pretty good.

However, there are some serious problems with the new format. The worst things are the hideously ugly black strips along the top and bottom of pages. What's up with that? The previous issues had the name of the adventure along the top. This was much neater and far more useful. Please bring the headers back! The same goes with the bottom of the page.

I'm also not too impressed with an entire page dedicated to a picture at the beginning of each adventure. The old style had a smaller picture and an entire column of text. This new style seems to waste space. Maybe if the quality of art were a tad better, I might accept that use of space, but as it stands now, I prefer fewer pictures and more text and maps.

Finally, the use of color seems, well, excessive. Maybe it's just me, but color seems to be splashed all over the place and makes the magazine a lot uglier. Please try to use color to highlight important areas, and draw the DM's eyes to necessary portions of text. Color should not be used for the sake of color, nor should it be used to make the magazine "pretty". It should always be used to make the DM's life easier.

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The Raker
ASYLUM
Marc Fasso
©

Deep Freeze

Method To the Madness

by Cameron Widen

artwork by Marc Sasso, cartography by Diesel

"Deep Freeze" is a D&D adventure for four 2nd-level characters. Since it emphasizes roleplaying and puzzle-solving rather than combat, the adventure is suitable for any mix of races and classes and can be easily adapted for characters of levels 1-8, as noted in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar.

The adventure takes place in the Theocracy of the Pale, in the northeastern portion of the Flanaess. With only a few modifications, however, this scenario can be adapted for several other campaign worlds; the FORGOTTEN REALMS, MYSTARA, and RAVENLOFT settings are all appropriate for this module.

Carefully read this adventure before attempting to run it. A firm grasp on the personalities and traits of the main NPCs is essential. Without a good working knowledge of the scenario, it will be difficult to deliver the subtle clues critical to the PCs success.

Adventure Summary

The PCs meet a man whose father and brother have disappeared while delivering supplies to an asylum in the mountains north of the city of Wintershiven. The man wishes to hire the PCs to find his family. Upon reaching the asylum, however, the PCs are told by the asylum's director that the two men never arrived. Forced to stay at the asylum for the night because of inclement weather, the PCs learn that the director is hiding something. Clues in and around the asylum point to the jagged mountains, wherein the director has made a sinister discovery. When the PCs explore the mountains, they discover a vast glacier from which protrudes a titanic black tower. Descending the interior of the tower, the PCs find a city frozen within the ice, where the inmates of the asylum (and the men the PCs were sent to find) are being forced to melt the glacier and free the horrible creatures trapped within. After a battle with the creature that set these events into motion, the PCs are able to free the enslaved inmates and prevent the escape of the evil creatures from ages past.

This adventure includes special rules for traversing glaciers and introduces a new monster: the faranth.

Adventure Background

North of the city of Wintershiven, deep among the imposing peaks of the Raker Mountains, lies the Raker Asylum for the Mad. Strategically placed in a pleasant valley remarkable for its idyllic calm (except when that calm is shattered by the occasional winter storm), the asylum rests in the midst of a mountain range of titanic snowcapped peaks and great fields of heather and stunted evergreens. This peaceful setting, however, belies the true horror that lies not far from the asylum proper, hidden in the mountains.

In the midst of the Raker Mountains, far beneath the ice of a vast glacier, lie the frozen ruins of an ancient city. Buried beneath hundreds of feet of solid ice, this last remnant of an eons-old civilization has squatted untouched since the time of its habitation. Untouched, however, does not mean uninhabited, for something yet dwells under the ice.

Thousands of years before the network of kingdoms and empires that cover the land were anything more than groups of petty tribes, a considerable portion of the Flanaess belonged to a grand and powerful race of grotesque, tentacled creatures known as the faranth. Whether they emigrated here from another plane or crash landed on Oerth in a spelljamming ship is unknown. Their empire stretched across the entire northern continent and south as far as the Nyr Dyv, an area which at that time consisted mostly of hot, steamy swamp land. Their cities were wondrous to behold, filled with gargantuan ziggurats and curiously shaped towers. Great roads of black basalt ran for hundreds of miles connecting the cities, and the skyships of the faranth emperors roamed the heavens.

After thousands of years of enlightened rule, however, calamity struck. A great star fell from the sky and landed in the sea. Huge clouds of vapor and dust filled the sky, throwing a dark pall across the landscape. The sun was hidden for three turns of the year, and no light reached the land. When the world grew cold and the great mountains of ice began their crawl across the land, even the tremendous powers and wisdom of the faranth were as naught compared to the impersonal and unstoppable forces of nature. With no crops to feed the people and their resources nearly depleted from trying to stave off the encroaching ice, the empire of the faranth disintegrated into anarchy and chaos. The once proud civilization decayed into roving bands and tribes, each one stealing what

Scaling the Adventure

This adventure is designed for a party of four 2nd-level PCs. It places greater emphasis on roleplaying than combat, which makes it relatively easy to modify for parties of higher or lower level.

1st-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, particularly if there are more than four PCs in the party. Be advised that the PCs might have a harder time defeating the faranth in area 11 of the Frozen City. If the PCs failed to find the *potions of cure light wounds* in the asylum, consider placing a potion or two in the Frozen City for the PCs to find.

3rd-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, particularly if there are fewer than four PCs in the adventuring party. If the PCs are having too easy a time, consider staging an encounter with one or more additional faranth as the PCs leave the Frozen City, or consider making the singular faranth a 2nd-level sorcerer.

4th-level PCs: Include an encounter with 1d4 additional faranth as the PCs try to leave the Frozen City. At least one of the faranth should have some sorcerer or rogue class levels.

5th- to 6th-level PCs: Include additional encounters with the freed faranth as well as encounters in the valley or atop the glacier. For instance, the PCs might need to fight their way past a remorhaz to reach the Black Tower

7th- to 12th-level PCs: Feel free to include more encounters with the sinister faranth. To add some variety, consider adding some overland encounters (a pack of gnolls, a pair of ogre rangers and their dire bear companions, or a hill giant and his wing-clipped manticore pet) or introduce some new creatures to the Frozen City. Perhaps the city has become home to a frost worm. Characters might stumble across the frost worm's tunnels in the northern section of the city.

You might also assume that the inmates have succeeded in thawing the faranth Imperial Palace, awakening the sleeping Emperor of the faranth and its minions, as well as several gargoyles that serve as palace guards. The Emperor is a high-level sorcerer and cleric who wants only to rebuild the Faranth Empire and turn all lesser creatures into thralls. Once freed, it sets about thawing and rebuilding the city, sending its most powerful thralls abroad to assess possible threats to the Faranth Empire.

This adventure includes little treasure. Feel free to add treasure to the adventure to satisfy greedier parties. Although the faranth do not collect gold and other mundane treasures, locked away in the frozen reaches of their city are magic items of terrific power that defy simple identification, not to mention airships powered by magic. Feel free to develop these treasures as you see fit.

it could from the others. War and deprivation were the rule as the bands were forced into ever smaller areas by the growing mountains of ice.

Not all of the faranth were subject to the famines and wars brought on by the disintegration of their empire. A member of the ruling class of the faranth, a powerful sorcerer-priest, went into hiding with his followers. Hoping to stave off the total decay of his civilization, this creature created a powerful magical item: the Slave Stone. Any who touched it became immutably loyal to the sorcerer-priest and the faranth state. While the Slave Stone saved a small pocket of the faranth society from anarchy, nothing could stop the physical destruction of their empire. The last emperor developed a ritual that would send his entire populace into a magical hibernation, thus sleeping away the eons while the great mountains of ice strode across the landscape. The faranth found a secluded, closed valley wherein they constructed a huge and beautiful city and filled it with all of the lore and art of their race. When the last stones were set and the final preparations made, the sorcerer-priest called down the power of his nameless god and invoked his magic.

Now, thousands of years later, all knowledge of the faranth has faded, and their works have been scraped from the face of the earth. Deep under the glacier at the center of the Raker Mountains, however, the last city of the faranth has sat for untold millennia, cold and silent beneath its crust of ice. At the bottom of a deep crevasse where a few buildings have recently melted free of the ice, life and movement have once again returned to the city.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins with the PCs arriving in Wintershiven. The following text assumes that the PCs are visiting the local temple, either to pay their respects or to receive healing. It should be modified as circumstances dictate:

> The calm of the nave washes over you like cool water, dissolving your worries and cares. Here in the temple, you feel a return of the peace so sorely lacking these last few days on the road. These solemn thoughts evaporate when a side door bursts open and an unshaven, disheveled man staggers through. By his appearance and aroma, it is clear that the man has spent at good deal of time and money at the tavern this evening. He is obviously inebriated, swaying on his feet like a blade of marsh grass in a strong wind.
>
> His eyebrows gather on his forehead like dueling caterpillars as he peers at you. "Jusht the people I wash lookin fer," he mutters under his breath. With a sour-smelling gurgle, the man collapses in a heap before you.

The man is Wohin, a stonemason from a small town to the south. Just over a week ago, he received a missive from his aging mother in Wintershiven that his father had gone missing while delivering a wagonload of supplies from the church to the insane asylum in the mountains north of the city. What's more, his brother, who went after the old man in the hope of finding him, has not yet returned either. Having just concluded another futile argument with the haughty Prelate of the temple, Wohin has decided he must speak with the PCs.

When the PCs manage to rouse the drunk stonemason, read or paraphrase the following:

> The man slowly opens his eyes and looks around with a tired, confused expression. Mumbling something unintelligible, he tries to stumble to his feet, only to come crashing down again, landing painfully on his behind.
>
> When you wrestle him out of the temple and into the cool night air, the man seems to regain enough of his composure to speak. His speech is slurred and his breath reeks of harsh spirits, but his words are understandable enough.

"Wohin's the name. I say, you fellers could really do me a good turn. If you folks wouldn't mind helping out a working man like myself, that is."

If the PCs seem inclined to help, a relieved smile crosses Wohin's face. He leads them to The Home of the Blinding Light, a comfortable inn, and orders them a round of barknut coffee and proceeds to tell them his story. Read or paraphrase the following:

Wohin slowly sips his coffee. "Well, I'll tell you right off I'm afraid I can't offer much in the way of payment, but from what I've heard of you hero types, you're good and honest folk who strive to bring justice to the land."

"My father and brother have disappeared. My father, Jacob, went missing while running a wagonload of supplies up to the insane asylum in the Raker Mountains northeast of town. My brother, Larion, who wasn't even old enough to shave yet, thought the old man had probably gotten snowed in and went up there to help him get home. Now he's gone, too. I hate to guess what might have happened to them. Do you think you can help me?"

Wohin is desperate to find clues to his father's and brother's whereabouts. When he arrived in Wintershiven, his mother was frantic, as her husband had already been missing for more than a week and a half, and her son for five days. Even so, she would not allow Wohin to go after them, fearing that he would meet the same fate. Now, another week later, Wohin has nearly given up on ever seeing his brother or father alive again. The PCs represent his last hope.

Privately, Wohin suspects that his kin have been taken captive or killed by humanoids while en route to the asylum. The only reason he holds any hope of their being alive is because a few of the humanoid tribes around Wintershiven have been known to take prisoners and demand ransoms for their release. He has not received any ransom demands or suspicious messages of any kind, but he doesn't want to wait until the bandits get around to demanding money before he acts.

If asked why he didn't go to the city guards about this, Wohin replies, "I did! But apparently, they have much more important things to deal with than a missing old man and his unemployed son, especially with the Theocrat's visit to Wintershiven in four days. I went to the temple, too, where my father gets his supplies. They refused to help! The priests suggested that I let the guards deal with it. Twenty years of hauling that stuff up there, and they won't even send somebody to see what happened!"

Wohin has some meager savings, and he is willing to pay the PCs for their help in this matter. He can offer them a lump sum of 200 gp, plus a promise of always having a place to stay and food to eat when they are in Wintershiven, but little else. If the PCs demand more, he says that he can sell his mason's tools for another 10 gp, but that's the best he can do.

Wohin advises the PCs to dress warmly, as it gets chilly in the mountains. He allows them to spend one day buying supplies and provisions for their travels, but if they tarry any longer than that, he approaches them again and reminds them that every hour they delay represents another hour his father and brother must remain lost or captive in the cold, unforgiving mountains.

Creature (EL 0): Wohin is 32 years old with blue eyes and a few gray hairs. He has the weathered face and hands of a man who has worked all his life. The numbers in parentheses reflect Wohin's statistics when he is inebriated.

Wohin, Male Human Exp2 (Mason): CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 2d6+7 (includes Toughness feat); hp 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (9); Atk +4 melee (1d4+3/crit 19-20, dagger), +1 ranged (+0); AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +0 (-1), Will +3 (+2); Str 16, Dex 10 (8), Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10 (8), Cha 11.

Skills: Appraise +5, Handle Animal +5, Listen +5 (+4), Profession (mason) +8 (+7), Ride +5 (+4), Spot +5 (+4), Swim +6. *Feats:* Skill Focus–Profession (mason), Toughness.

Possessions: dagger, pouch containing 4 gp. Wohin also has a set of mason's tools, a bedroll, and a mule at his mother's house where he is staying.

Journey To the Asylum

The Raker Asylum for the Mad lies two days' ride north of the city of Wintershiven. The countryside through which the PCs travel consists of pleasant hills dotted here and there by squat, dome-shaped halfling homes and the occasional human farmstead. A cold, heavy downpour greets the PCs the morning they begin their journey and continues for the duration of their trip.

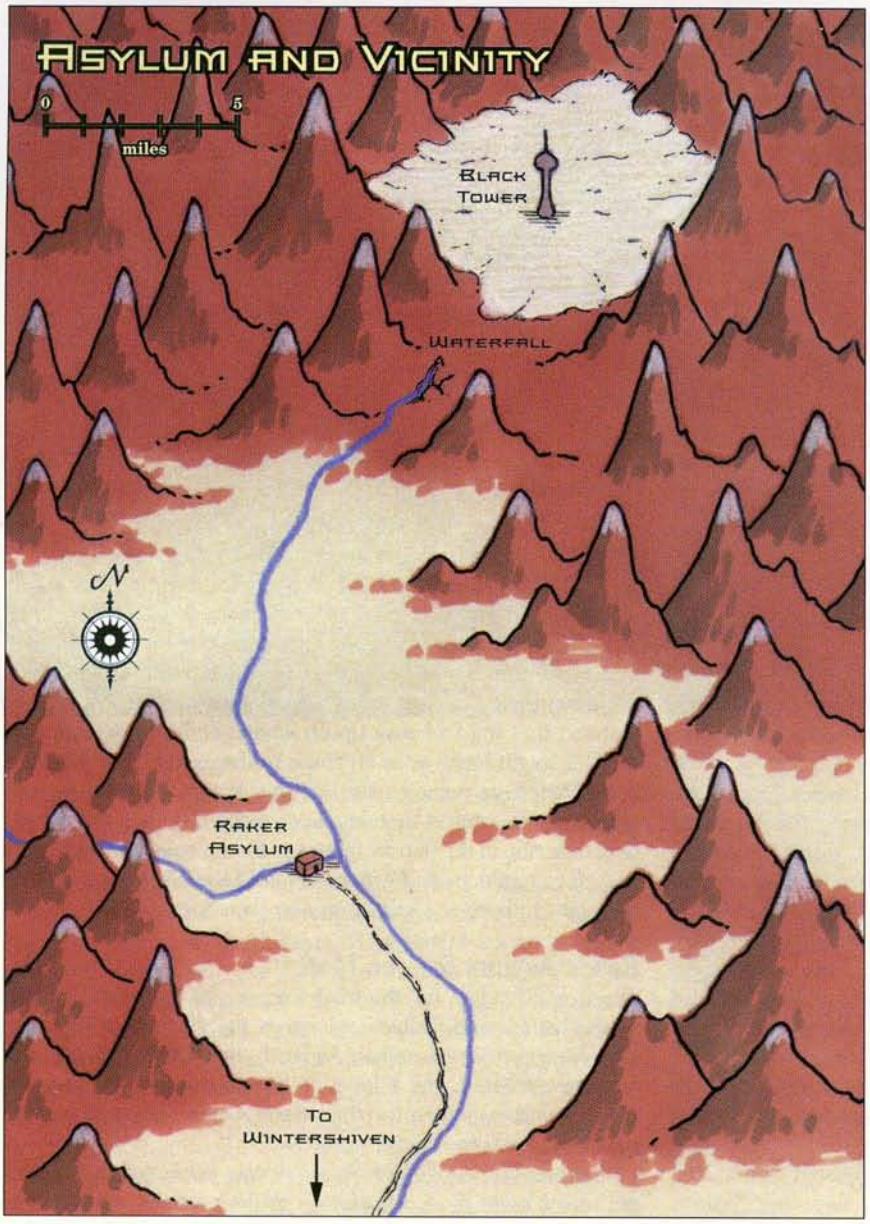
The journey passes uneventfully, although it is recommended that the DM play up on whatever fears or concerns the PCs might have while en route to the asylum. For instance, if the PCs have come to suspect that Wohin's father was kidnapped or murdered by humanoids while traveling to the asylum, describe in detail how the trees by the road are very dark and close together, and create several false alarms throughout the night to keep the characters on their toes.

Raker Asylum for the Mad

The Raker Asylum for the Mad was one of the most humane, sophisticated, and livable asylums in the Flanaess. Under the kindly care of Dr. Jonathan Asworth, the inmates of the asylum were treated with a level of compassion and respect not often found in homes for the insane. Lately, however, things have taken a turn for the worse.

Several weeks ago, Dr. Asworth was awakened in the middle of the night by a disturbance in the common room of the asylum. When he investigated the commotion, the doctor discovered Hubert, a huge but usually gentle resident of the asylum, tangled with the remains of a creature he had never seen before. The monster was gelatinous in texture and somewhat similar in appearance to a great black toad, but with a ring of appalling black tentacles stretching from its neck instead of a head. After much careful questioning, Dr. Asworth was able to determine that Hubert had spied the creature in the sewer below while he was attending to a call of nature and had panicked, wrenching the grating from the floor and using it to beat the creature to death. The frightened Hubert also insisted that there was another such monster still beneath the asylum. With the help of Shaver, his assistant, Dr. Asworth searched the area around the asylum and found two strange, slimy trails leading into the sewer and another leading away. Returning to the asylum, the doctor set Shaver to work repairing the damage while he removed the body for examination.

After a week of dissections, tests, and research, Dr. Asworth concluded that the creature originated from the nearby mountains. Against his better judgment but unable to resist his



however, he asked Shaver to accompany him back to the glacier. A few days later, the director and his assistant began bringing inmates over the mountains and beneath the ice.

By the time the PCs arrive at the asylum, only five inmates still reside there. The rest have been taken to the glacier, bound by the Slave Stone's magic, and forced to thaw the ice and free the ancient city of the faranth.

Late on the second day after setting out, the PCs reach the asylum. Although the valley affords the asylum some shelter, the PCs are caught in the first bad storm of the winter season. If any PCs are not outfitted properly for the cold, they must make a successful Fortitude saving throw each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or sustain 1d6 points of subdual damage. A character who makes a successful Wilderness Lore skill check (DC 15) receives a +2 bonus to this saving throw and can apply this bonus to other characters as well. A PC who sustains any subdual damage from cold or exposure suffers from hypothermia and is treated as fatigued.

PCs who are fatigued cannot run or charge and suffer an effective penalty of -2 to Strength and Dexterity. A fatigued PC becomes exhausted (see below) by doing something else that would normally cause fatigue. After 8 hours of complete rest, fatigued PCs are no longer fatigued.

Exhausted PCs move at half normal speed and suffer an effective penalty of -6 to Strength and Dexterity. After 1 hour of complete rest, an exhausted PC becomes fatigued (see above).

scientific curiosity, Dr. Asworth followed the monster's slimy trail through the mountains. There he spied an immense obsidian tower jutting from the center of a glacier. He followed the scant trail until it reached the edifice, climbed to a balcony that jutted from the side of the tower, and descended the ramp on the inside, finally reaching the bottom of the vast structure just as night was falling. Lighting a torch, Dr. Asworth began to make his way deeper into the frozen city. Thinking that he spied some movement among the flickering shadows to his left, he headed in that direction. As soon as he reached the spot where he thought he had seen it, however, he saw a shadow move again, farther back among the buildings. Still unaware that he was being deliberately led deeper into the city, he eventually found himself in the hall of the great temple, standing before a huge piece of dull black stone. Mesmerized, he reached out and touched it, sealing his fate.

When Dr. Asworth returned to the asylum, Shaver thought that the director's behavior seemed odd. Dr. Asworth brushed it off, saying he was just tired from the journey. The next day,

Meeting Dr. Asworth

Read or paraphrase the following to the players when they reach the Raker Asylum for the Mad:

> A blistering, cold wind tears at your clothes. Through the curtains of blowing snow, lying in the vale ahead among the sharp mountain peaks, stands an ugly, angular stone structure. Although it seems to lie only a few minutes away, distances in the mountains can be deceiving. After another miserable half-hour in the freezing wind, you pass a wrought iron sign that reads "Raker Asylum For The Mad" and manage to gain the doorstep of the building.
>
> The asylum is an intimidating stone structure that almost seems to be part of the mountain itself. It hulks like a gray monstrosity in the middle of this barren landscape, throwing back the blows dealt it by the wind with grim resilience. The only light visible comes from a portico on the south face of the structure. A lantern hangs to the right of the door, which is fixed with a large, heavy iron knocker.

If the PCs decide that they want to explore the compound before they enter the asylum, the DM should remind them that the temperature outside is well below freezing. When they are ready to proceed, read the following:

> With fingers so numb that you are scarcely able to grasp the ring, you work the knocker and step back. You are greeted at the door by a young man of about 30 years dressed in a clean white smock. He looks surprised but invites you in. Shaking hands all around, he introduces himself as Doctor Jonathan Asworth and bids you to remove your coats. "You look frozen half to death," he says, shaking his head and making "tsk tsk" noises to himself. "Have you dined? I have a fresh pot of soup on the hearth."

When the PCs have settled in and begun their meal, the doctor inquires as to their business at the asylum, answering any questions they have. If the PCs ask about the missing stonemason and his son, Dr. Asworth tells them that neither man arrived and that he has no clue as to their current whereabouts. He expresses dismay at their disappearance, as he was on good terms with the elder mason. PCs can attempt a Sense Motive skill check (DC 20) to realize that Dr. Asworth knows more than he's telling. If the PCs accuse him of lying to them, he looks insulted and asks them to leave at once. Any PC who rolls 25 or higher on the Sense Motive skill check realizes that Dr. Asworth's behavior is being influenced by some form of enchantment.

Dr. Asworth has been *charmed* by the Slave Stone in the city beneath the glacier, solidifying his loyalty to the faranth above all else. He has returned to the asylum one last time to collect the last five inmates and bring them to the faranth city so that they can be put to work as well. By sheer luck, the PCs were able to catch him before they left.

PCs attempting to learn the whereabouts of the stonemason and his son through intimidation find that Dr. Asworth possesses formidable resolve. If the PCs make a successful Intimidate skill check (DC 22), Dr. Asworth spins a tale about how, during the stonemason's last visit, Pym escaped from her straightjacket and attacked him. Asworth claims that the stonemason was so horrified by the attack that he refused to be consoled and left the asylum right away. When the son arrived a few days later, he learned of the unfortunate encounter and set out to find his father. Dr. Asworth tells the PCs that he fears both men might have fallen prey to humanoids or yeti coming down from the mountains. A successful Sense Motive skill check (DC 20) reveals that Dr. Asworth's story is untrue.

If a *detect thoughts* spell is cast on Asworth, the PCs gain nothing more than an impression of confusion and chaos, with a sensation of urgency. While under the effect of the Slave Stone, Dr. Asworth's true thoughts are nearly impossible to ascertain.

Dr. Jonathan Asworth

Male Human, 5th-level Expert

Strength	10	Fortitude Save	+1
Dexterity	9	Reflex Save	+0
Constitution	11	Will Save	+5*
Intelligence	17	Alignment	LG
Wisdom	8	Speed	30 ft.
Charisma	15	Size	5 ft. 6 in.
Armor Class	9	Melee Attack:	+3
Hit Points	19	Ranged Attack:	+2

* Will save includes the +2 bonus for the Iron Will feat.

Skills: Alchemy +13, Diplomacy +9, Heal +9, Knowledge (biology) +12, Knowledge (chemistry) +12, Listen +5 (includes Alertness feat), Profession (doctor) +10, Ride +5, Search +10, Spot +6 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Iron Will, Skill Focus–Profession (doctor).

Possessions: Scrubs, leather gloves, notepad, lead pencil, keys to all doors in the asylum.

Roleplaying

Dr. Asworth has been *charmed* by the Slave Stone of the Faranth. Nevertheless, he retains his intelligence and charm. Be careful not to portray Dr. Asworth as the clichéd "mad doctor." He is young, friendly, and well groomed. He can speak intelligently and sustain a conversation. If caught in a lie, he glosses it over with a joke and claims to be tired from the long days of work.

Motivations

Dr. Asworth is primarily concerned with allaying the PCs' suspicions and getting back to the task at hand, namely transporting the remaining residents to the work site beneath the glacier. He does whatever he deems necessary to keep the knowledge of the hidden city from the adventurers, short of a physical confrontation, as he doesn't want the existence of the frozen city to be known at large until the faranth are ready to rise up and reclaim their place as masters of the known world. He still feels a great deal of responsibility to the people under his care but, if faced with a decision between the two, he casts his lot with the faranth.

Strategy

If Dr. Asworth has any reason to suspect that the PCs are on to him or have discovered the existence of the faranth city, he does his utmost to convince them otherwise. If hard pressed, he flees to the glacier to warn the remaining faranth about the possibility of interference in his plans. Before leaving, though, Dr. Asworth does what he can to make it difficult for the PCs to follow (for example, stealing their boots and discarding them several miles from the asylum). The doctor would prefer not to take this course of action, as he doesn't want to lead the PCs to the city.

If the PCs do something as foolish as entering an isolation chamber all at the same time with Dr. Asworth in the vicinity, he tries to trap them but does not risk his own well-being to set up such a situation. He might also lace their food or drink with the sleeping drug in the laboratory if that course of action seems viable. If captured by the PCs, the doctor reveals nothing. He is so fanatically loyal that not even the threat of death can make him betray his new masters.

When the meal is finished, the doctor invites the PCs to spend the night in the custodians' rooms before they leave in the morning, telling them that the asylum has been without custodians for months since there are so few inmates. The PCs are provided with clean blankets from the storeroom and hot stones from the kitchen hearth to warm their feet.

Development: If the PCs wish to explore the asylum during the night, they meet no opposition provided they are not discovered. If they create a disturbance or behave suspiciously, the doctor asks them to leave—an unpleasant proposition, considering the weather. If they persist to the point where they become dangerous, Dr. Asworth leaves the asylum and flees to the city beneath the glacier to warn the workers there of the PCs' interference.

Dr. Asworth's departure might present the PCs with a problem, as there are still five inmates left in the asylum. What the PCs decide to do with them, if anything, will depend on their alignments and how urgently they feel they need to catch Asworth. The simplest and perhaps best solution would be to take the inmates along with them. This solution could provide fodder for roleplaying encounters, but feel free to discourage it if the extra NPCs would entail a substantial increase in bookkeeping and bog down game play. Consider awarding bonus experience point to PCs who come up with clever solutions to this quandary that are appropriate to their alignments.

Asylum Encounters

All doors in the asylum are made of thick oak with iron hinges. They can be locked, and Dr. Asworth carries the only set of keys. Rooms are typically illuminated by oil lanterns hanging from the ceiling rafters.

Iron-reinforced Oak Doors: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 18.

1. Kitchen and Dining Room.

This room—a combination kitchen and dining room—appears neat and clean. A large pot of soup bubbles above the hot coals of the hearth in the northwest wall, and clean dishes are stacked on the counters. A table with four chairs dominates the center of the room.

If the PCs investigate the washbasins, they discover small holes in the bottoms connected to pipes that lead to a network of sewer pipes built beneath the asylum. At 2 inches in diameter, however, the pipes are too small to invite exploration.

2. Pantry.

Stout, frost-rimed wooden shelves line the walls of this cold stone room. A small window high in the east wall lets in a biting draft, while a few large blocks of ice in the far corner serve to further emphasize the chill. The room appears large enough to contain an ample amount of provisions, but the shelves are nearly bare.

A quick inventory of the room shows two wheels of cheese, a rind of bacon, a sack of onions, and a large ham. A cursory investigation of the shelves reveals frost-free patches on the wood in various shapes and sizes where the food supplies of the asylum have been removed to the city beneath the glacier. A more careful examination of the floor reveals large, circular rings of ice where barrels once sat but were later removed.

If the PCs decide to explore the blocks of ice at the back of the pantry, they discover several jars filled with a strange, foul-smelling fluid and assorted bizarre organs packed away among the ice-blocks. Most of these are unidentifiable, but there are two items of note: a grotesque, black tentacle with red-lipped suckers, and strange toe or finger with a large claw and cut areas where it seems webbing was removed. All of the body parts have been well preserved by the fluid and the cold. These are some specimens Dr. Asworth felt needed further study when he dissected the faranth that was killed in the common room of the asylum. Careful study of the jar containing the toe reveals grains of fine black sand in the creases of the skin and at the bottom of the jar.

3. Shaver's Room.

This room appears to be a bedchamber for a member of the asylum staff. A neatly made bed, night table, and wardrobe comprise the furnishings, and an unadorned rug completes the decor.

This room belonged to Shaver, Dr. Asworth's assistant, up until a week and a half ago when Shaver went to work thawing the ice beneath the glacier. PCs who explore this room and make a successful Search skill check (DC 15) find a barely stale bread crust wedged between the bed and the wall. If they sleep in this room, they discover to their dismay that the bed is ridden with bedbugs. These facts should lead PCs to conclude that Dr. Asworth's claim of having worked alone for months is untrue.

4. Empty Bedchamber. This room is identical to area **3** except that there is nothing of interest here. Use the same boxed text when describing the room.

5. Laboratory.

Waist-high work benches covered with bizarre medical and scientific equipment protrude from the left- and right-hand walls of this room. A sturdy wooden table covered with ugly dark stains stands in the middle of the chamber, while a bookshelf lined with leather-bound tomes and a reading stand decorate the far wall.

The equipment on the work benches consists of scalpels, pins, saws, beakers, candles, scales, and related apparatus. The whole collection might fetch as much as 250 gp from the right buyer, but transporting the contents of the lab would require a great deal of work, as the equipment is bulky and fragile.

The bookshelf contains various scientific works, with journals on anatomy, chemistry, biology, botany, and the like. There are thirty such books, each of which would fetch 1d6 × 10 gp from someone with an interest in science. The books are bulky, weighing 10-15 lbs. each.

Investigating the table turns up traces of gelatinous black blood that none of the PCs has encountered before.

The most important clue that the PCs can find requires a successful Search skill check (DC 12): a fragment of the notes Dr. Asworth took during his dissection of the faranth, which can be found in a crumpled ball under the bookshelves. These

notes are presented in Handout #1. The notes, in conjunction with the doctor's journal in area **6**, should lead the PCs to the next stage of their investigation.

Treasure: An unlabeled bottle on the bench (one of many) contains a powerful sleeping drug; the imbiber must make a successful Fortitude check (DC 16) or fall unconscious for 2d8 hours. Three other bottles contain *potions of cure light wounds.* Only Dr. Asworth and Shaver know the contents of the bottles. A careful search of the work benches turns up a magnifying glass hidden underneath some scrolls of anatomical drawings.

6. Dr. Asworth's Bedchamber.

The far wall of this comfortable bedchamber contains a fireplace flanked by wooden shelves. An overstuffed chair sits in front of the hearth. A bed rests against the wall to your left with a small chest at its foot. To your right stands a wardrobe and a coathook with a heavy cloak hung upon it and muddy fur-lined boots beneath.

The wardrobe contains nothing but a light jacket and several smocks, all of the same style as worn by Dr. Asworth.

The chest at the foot of the bed contains the doctor's clothing. Buried about halfway down are the remains of his journal along with a small pot of ink and a quill pen. The doctor ripped out all of the pages of the book and burnt them so that no evidence of the city beneath the ice remained. However, buried among the ashes of the fire, one scrap of paper remains; finding it requires a successful Search check (DC 15). See Player's Handout #2 for details. The burnt journal fragment is dated three weeks prior to the PCs' arrival at the asylum.

On the shelves against the south wall the PCs can find such oddments as a small painting of a pretty young woman, a human skull, a hunk of glassy black obsidian, a potted venus flytrap plant, a set of tin soldiers, and other curiosities. The shelves also contain the crushed remains of the faranth's flute, which it was carrying when it was killed by Hubert. The broad pan flute has intricate filigree work on the pipes and strangely designed mouthpieces.

Examination of the boots beneath the coathook reveals small quantities of black sand stuck in the seams of the leather.

7. Common Room.

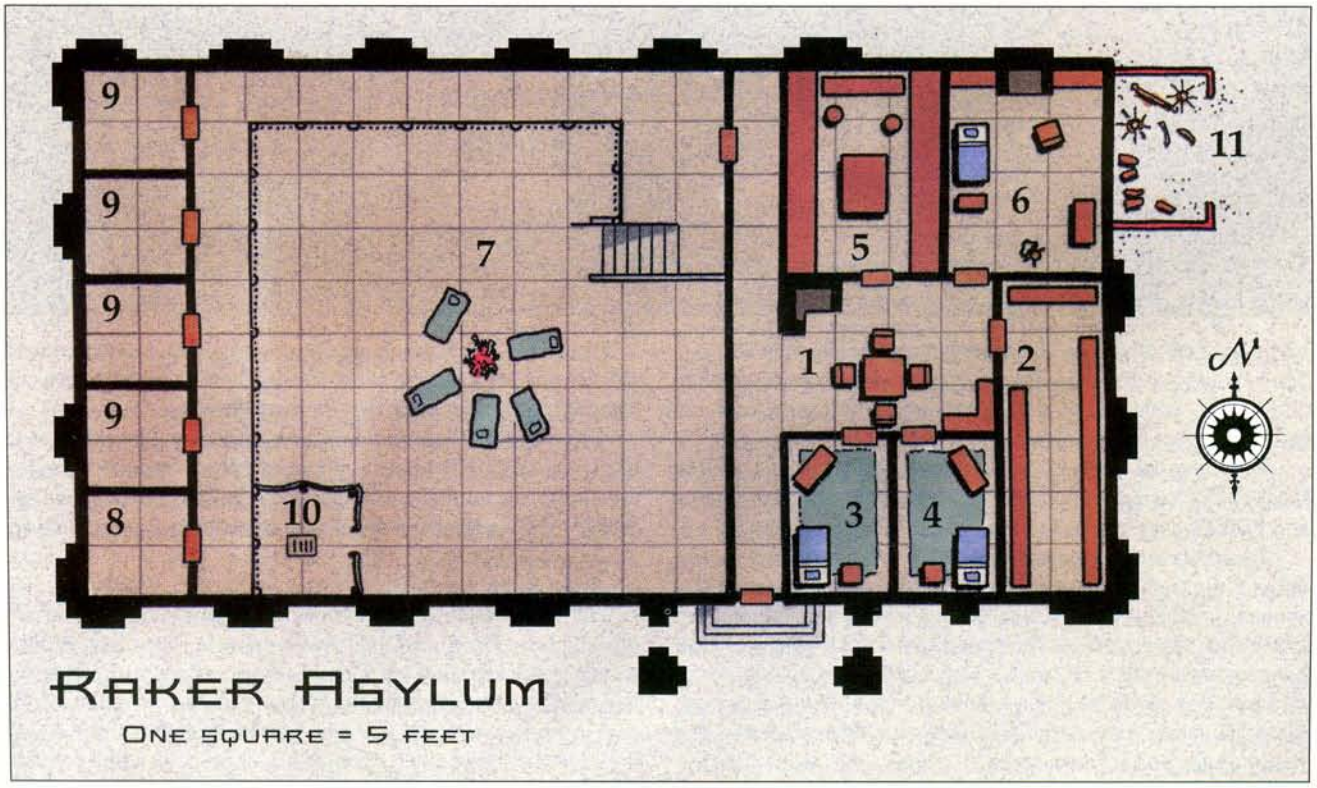
This room is where most of the inmates of the asylum live. There are currently only five residents here, as the rest have been taken to the ruined city beneath the glacier to work.

This 50-foot-square room is spacious, dark, and filled with the odor of unwashed bodies. You are standing on a platform that rises about 5 feet above the floor and is surrounded by an iron railing. A walkway runs from the platform along the north and west walls. You can see five doors set into the far wall and a small canvas tent in the corner opposite. A set of stairs leads from the platform to the floor below.

In the center of the room there is a large fire pit in which smolders a red heap of ashes. Five figures sit on bedrolls around the fire pit, huddled under blankets. All are wearing plain uniforms, and one is wearing a straight jacket as well.

The platform on which the PCs stand is constructed of stone. It rises straight up from the floor, forming a ledge. There is no space to crawl beneath. The railing is composed of metal poles connected by heavy chain.

If the PCs decide to explore this room, they must contend with the remaining residents. Depending on how the PCs conduct themselves, this might mean as little as speaking to the inmates in a conciliatory tone or as much as defending themselves from attack. Of course, good-aligned PCs should not



harm or allow others to harm the inmates if they can avoid it. The inmates can be a valuable source of clues and information if the PCs communicate with them properly. (See **Creatures** below for more information on the inmates.)

Searching the bedrolls reveals dozens of strange artifacts, from bits of string and pretty rocks to caches of hidden food and (hidden carefully in Pym's bedroll) a human jawbone.

The canvas tent is an outhouse of sorts. The tent conceals nothing more than a metal grating in the floor, about 2 feet square. A careful examination of the canvas and the wooden framework shows clean patches and some fresh pieces of lumber, recent repairs from the brawl that ensued when the faranth came up from the sewer pipe below. The grating also looks like it has been wrenched from the floor recently and then hammered back into place.

Creatures (EL 2 for Pym): The five people seated around the fire are Harl, Darco, Gibs, Therese, and Pym. Statistics and roleplaying tips for each can be found below.

Harl, Male Human Com1: CR 1/2; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 4; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +0 melee (1d3 subdual, fist); AL CN; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2 (includes Iron Will feat); Str 11, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills: Jump +4, Spot +4. *Feats:* Endurance, Iron Will.

Harl is a middle-aged man who firmly believes that he is a powerful emperor, and that everything he sees and experiences is a dream that he is having while asleep in his Imperial bedchamber. Occasionally he attempts to "prove" to someone that everything is just a dream, ramming his head into a wall or stabbing somebody with a sharp object. Be careful not to

overplay Harl; he doesn't run around ranting that he's an emperor. He just speaks and carries himself like a born aristocrat. Harl doesn't know where the other inmates have disappeared to, but he knows that Dr. Asworth and Shaver usually take them five at a time from the common room and that they are neither seen nor heard from again.

Darco, Male Human Com2: CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 10 in. tall); HD 2d4-6; hp 2; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +0 melee (1d3-1 subdual, fist); AL N; SV Fort -1 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +0, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 5, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +4, Listen +6, Search +5, Spot +6. *Feats:* Alertness, Great Fortitude. Darco's Listen and Spot scores include the +2 bonus for the Alertness feat.

Darco is the newest resident of the Raker Asylum. He is 40 years old but looks much older. His overpowering and irrational fear of open spaces meant that he could no longer leave his home, and this caused him to lose his job as a militiaman. He fell to drinking, and his health deteriorated rapidly. When he was kicked out of his home, he took up residence in the crawlspace beneath a nearby shop. Darco's madness manifests itself only when he is made to go outside. Otherwise, he is generally uncommunicative and surly.

Gibs, Male Halfling Rog2: CR 2; Small Humanoid (2 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 2d6+4; hp 14; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (+1 size, +3 Dex); Atk -1 melee (1d3-2 subdual, fist); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ evasion; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will -1; Str 7, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 13.

Skills: Bluff +5, Gather Information +4, Hide +8, Innuendo +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Open Locks +7, Pick Pockets +8, Rope Use +6, Search +5, Spot +4.

Gibs is a halfling cutpurse who would no doubt have made a wonderful career for himself stealing from others if it were not for the vivid hallucinations he gets whenever he becomes excited. As long as the situation remains relaxed, Gibs has no problems whatsoever. However, if he becomes stressed, Gibs begins seeing hungry, fanged mouths everywhere: on the floors, on walls, on other people, and even on himself. These hallucinations, of course, cause him to panic and begin screaming uncontrollably. Gibs has no idea where Dr. Asworth has been taking the other inmates, but he has noticed that the doctor has also removed most of the heavy winter blankets from the storage closet.

Therese, Female Human Com1: CR 0; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 1d4+1; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk none (see below); AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 9, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: None. *Feats:* None.

Therese is middle-aged and catatonic. If she is pulled to her feet, she stands on her own power but does nothing but stare silently. She can be led around but initiates no actions whatsoever, even in self-defense.

Pym, Female Human War3: CR 2; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 3 in. tall); HD 3d8 (includes Toughness feat); hp 20; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +5 melee (1d3+2, claw); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 9, Int 17, Wis 7, Cha 14.

Skills: Climb +8, Escape Artist +8, Jump +8, Ride +8, Swim +8. *Feats:* Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Toughness.

Pym is an attractive young woman in her early twenties with large blue eyes and long lashes. She is dressed in a straight jacket. If asked, she claims that the reason she is in the asylum is that she feels compelled to set things on fire. This is true, but not the whole story.

Pym is violent and crafty, desiring nothing but to do harm to people. If the PCs are not careful around Pym, she finds a way to undo her straight jacket (requiring a successful Escape Artist skill check against DC 20) and secures a weapon with which to murder someone. Pym is surprisingly strong and quite agile, but she hides these facts from the PCs until it is time to strike. She possesses the Improved Unarmed Strike feat, which means that armed opponents do not get attacks of opportunity when she attacks them unarmed. The other four inmates know the truth about Pym's condition and might tell the PCs if asked in an appropriate manner; this requires a successful Diplomacy or Gather Information skill check (DC 20).

8. Supplies Closet. This area is used for storing blankets, extra resident uniforms, cleaning supplies, and the like.

9. Isolation Rooms. These small padded cells are used to isolate inmates who pose a threat to their fellow residents. The walls are covered with a heavy quilted material, and the floor has a small drain built into it. The stout iron-reinforced oak door is locked and set with a small barred window. Dr. Asworth carries the only set of keys that will unlock the doors.

10. The Sewers. Beneath the asylum lies a rudimentary sewer system. It is comprised of a single main tunnel, about 6 feet in height, and several small pipes leading from the lab, kitchen, and isolation rooms. A larger pipe, about 2 feet in diameter, leads from a stream to the west of the asylum and carries water to flush out the main pipe, which leads all the way to the creek that comes down out of the mountains to the north.

Any PC brave enough to climb down into the sewers must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 12) or be overcome with nausea, suffering a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks. The nausea passes 1d6 minutes after the PC leaves the sewers. PCs examining the sewer floor detect several recent sets of tracks in the muck. There are two sets of human footprints, left behind by Dr. Asworth and Shaver when they went down to make sure there were no more creatures, as well as two strange slithering tracks entering the sewer. Only one set leads back out. The creek that the sewer pipe flows into is covered with a thin rind of ice. The bank of the stream, where it has been disturbed by the footsteps leading into and out of the sewer pipe, shows evidence of large quantities of black sand mixed in with the usual gravel and topsoil. The creek flows through the valley from the mountains to the north.

11. Woodshed. This is a small wooden lean-to set against the wall of the building. There are a few chopped pieces of wood and some sticks of kindling laying around, but almost no cut wood stockpiled; this is because the wood has all been carried down to the faranth city to sustain the fires that melt the ice.

If anyone examines the dirt floor of the structure, they discover the metal remnants of a wagon, such as metal cartwheel rims and axles, as well as a large hammer and a prybar. These were left here when the stonemason's wagon was scavenged for its wood. The mule used to pull the wagon, as well as the mason's son's horse, were used to transport the wood and supplies down to the glacier and remain in the faranth city.

HANDOUT #1

toadlike. Despite this, I haven't been able to determine the exact nature of the creature's respiratory system. Perhaps some form of absorption via the epidermis?

(later) My preliminary examination suggests that the creature is quite unlike anything found in nature. As for the strange pipes found with the remains, the workmanship shows a great deal of sophistication, far in advance of anything I have seen (although I am admittedly no expert on musical instruments).

Scrapings from under the toenails showed small traces of black sand, much like that found in the stream that runs through the valley, which has its source deeper in the

Found in area 5 of the asylum.

Found in area 6 of the asylum.

HANDOUT #2

October 19
The dissection proceeds apace. Perhaps most startling among the discoveries is the fact that there might yet be s
di overs

en without the
even more so, I
what would make it desire to come here? This is far too crucial a discovery to let it pass by, notwithstanding the danger it might pose to the safety of the asylum and the residents herein. Therefore, I plan to mount an expedition to find out for certain. I am sure that the danger will be minimal, as long as I remember my mittens, ha, ha, ha. Shaver can look after things here while I'm

Across the Ice

At some point during their exploration of the asylum or their conversations with Dr. Asworth, the PCs should conclude that something is not right. Their investigation should lead them to the glacier among the peaks north of the asylum and the ancient city beneath.

The wisest course for the PCs would be to wait until morning before attempting any exploration outside the asylum itself. Navigating their way over the mountains and down the cliff face leading to the glacier is a tricky proposition at best, and trying to do it in the dark with blowing snow to further obscure their vision would make matters even more difficult.

When the PCs decide to head for the glacier and have made their preparations, read or paraphrase the following:

Breathing a thankful sigh of relief, you open the door to find sunshine, the blizzard of the night before having blown itself out. Shielding your eyes from the sun, you begin wading through the knee-deep snow north of the asylum.

By mid-afternoon, you are high in the mountains behind the asylum, having passed the source of the creek that runs near the asylum: a gushing fountain that springs from a rent in the slope and then cascades down the mountainside in a beautiful waterfall. It is not long before you crest the ridge and gain a view of the valley beyond.

A titanic bowl among the mountain peaks, the valley is no less than breathtaking. A vast sheet of ice riddled with cracks of unknown depth covers the entire valley floor.

To your surprise, the entire central portion of the glacier is obscured by a thick pall of steam. As you watch, it seems to undulate gently in the wind, almost like an amorphous living creature.

PCs who make a successful Spot skill check (DC 25) see a visible, winding trail leading from the top of the cliff down to the ice 500 feet below. A series of ropes tied to small bushes and outcroppings follows the trail for most of its length. PCs who don't spot the trail immediately can search for it; this requires a successful Search skill check (DC 25).

PCs using the trail can descend the cliff without incident. PCs who don't use the trail must make three difficult Climb skill checks (DC 15). First, however, each PC must make a successful Will saving throw (DC 11). Those who fail are overcome with dizziness and vertigo because of the sheer distance to the ice below and suffer a -2 penalty to their Climb checks. A new Will save can be attempted before each new Climb check; once a PC makes the save, no further saving throws are required. The PCs cannot take 20 on the Climb checks.

A failed Climb check means that the PC has lost his or her grip and started an uncontrollable slide down the rocky slope, falling 1d6 × 10 feet per round and taking 1d3 points of damage per 10 feet. Sliding PCs must make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15) the following round to halt their descent, or they continue sliding and taking damage (until they make the saving throw or reach the bottom). Of course, any extraordinary measures taken by the PCs beforehand to safeguard against this sort of mishap should be taken into account.

Trap (EL 2): The glacier is riddled with crevasses. All tracks made by Dr. Asworth and his wards have been obliterated by the fresh snow and high winds that race across the ice.

If the PCs spread themselves out across the ice, have each character in the lead make three Search skill checks (DC 15); if the PCs move across the ice in single file, only the lead PC makes the Search checks. Each success reveals a hidden crevasse that, once detected, can be easily circumvented. A failed roll means the lead PC has fallen into a hidden crevasse. You might allow the PC to make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) to grab the lip of the crevasse and avoid the fall; otherwise, the PC disappears into the snow as though swallowed by some hidden beast, falling 1d6 × 10 feet before becoming wedged between the walls of the crevasse. Exercise all of your malign creativity in determining the results of this mishap short of killing the PCs; for instance, a PC might find herself head-down with her arms securely wedged at her sides. This should not be a lethal encounter—just a difficult one that forces the players to exercise their brains. Careful planning and forethought might avoid this trouble entirely, subject to the DM's malevolence.

The glacier is treated as a CR 2 encounter. PCs who avoid falling into the crevasses should receive commensurate experience points for the "encounter."

Creature (EL 3): If the PCs are aching for a fight, you might want to stage an encounter with an ice mephit. At a distance greater than 10 feet, the mephit resembles nothing more than an icy outcropping, its wings folded about it. Spotting the ice mephit requires a successful Spot skill check opposed by the mephit's Hide skill check.

Ice Mephit (1): CR 3; Small Outsider (Air, Cold) (3 ft. tall); HD 3d8; hp 13; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 18 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +4/+4 melee (1d3/1d3, claws; each claw deals an additional 2 points of cold damage); SA breath weapon, spell-like abilities, summon mephit; SQ cold subtype, fast healing 2, damage reduction 5/+1; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +6, Hide +12, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +6. *Feat:* Improved Initiative.

SA—Breath Weapon (Su): Cone of ice shards, 10 feet; damage 1d4, Reflex save (DC 12) for half. Living creatures that fail their saving throws suffer a -3 morale penalty to AC and a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls for 3 rounds due to frostbite.

SA—Spell-like Abilities (Sp): 1/hour—magic missile (as Sor3); 1/day—chill metal (as Sor6).

SA—Summon Mephit (Sp): Once per day, the ice mephit can attempt to summon another ice mephit (as per the *summon monster* spell) with a 25% chance of success.

SQ—Cold Subtype (Ex): Cold immunity; double damage from fire except on a successful save.

SQ—Fast Healing (Ex): If it is touching ice or if the ambient temperature is freezing or below, the ice mephit heals 2 hit points of damage per round.

Reaching the Black Tower

It takes the PCs until nightfall to reach the vast curtain of mist they observed from the top of the cliff. When they do so, read or paraphrase the following:

> As you near the veil of mist that rises from the heart of the glacier, the sun slides behind the mountains. The shadow of the peaks crawls across the ice toward you. The air grows instantly colder. The temperature is well below freezing, and the moisture in the air quickly condenses on your clothing and hair, covering everything with an icy glaze. The mist freezes into the snow, forming a rock-hard and razor-sharp crust on the top.
>
> An immense shape slowly materializes out of the mists: A titanic tower protrudes from the ice like a mountain unto itself! Built from house-sized blocks of obsidian, it reaches hundreds of feet above the ice into the night sky, terminating in a curiously wrought minaret. You spot a balcony, perhaps 20 feet above the level of the ice, backed by a doorway so tall as to be lost in the mist. Leading to it is a shallow ramp of ice blocks covered with a prodigious amount of black sand. The ramp seems of recent construction.

This tower was built by the faranth millennia ago as a watch tower so that they might survey all roads leading into and out of their valley. It now serves a different purpose: It is a way into the city beneath the ice.

Frozen City of the Faranth

Trying to free its comrades from their hibernation has been an exercise in frustration for the remaining faranth. Its first plan of using the new laborers to manually remove the ice was for naught, as there were no tools adequate to the task. The creature has since turned its efforts toward melting the ice with fire and has met with somewhat more success in this venture. The faranth knows that it will not need to use these contemptible humans much longer, for even as the PCs are arriving on site, the bloated monstrosity is mere hours away from freeing more of its kind. Whether or not it gets the chance to do so depends on the actions of the PCs.

The city is lit only by the flickering light of the fires in the south end, where the faranth has concentrated its efforts, knowing that the Imperial palace lies in that direction. This is also where the majority of the NPCs are found, as well as the faranth itself, unless they have been forewarned of the PCs' impending arrival by Dr. Asworth. If this is the case, they arm themselves with the curious curved spears and take up defensive positions in areas marked with an X on the map. The faranth is a master of tactics and attempts to attack the PCs from several directions simultaneously.

Most of the steam that is created by the melting of the ice eventually escapes out the tower and contributes to the billowing cloud of mist that the PCs observed from the edge of the glacier. Only those buildings closest to the tower are free from ice. The remainder are solidly filled with ice, as even the most cursory examination will reveal; these are not dealt with in this adventure. The floors of the cavern not cobbled by flagstones are covered with a carpet of fine black sand.

The city itself is a wonder of architecture, awe-inspiring and horrifying to behold. The buildings are massive almost beyond conception and exhibit a knowledge of physics and engineering far beyond that of even the most advanced cultures of humankind. The art is likewise of an extremely advanced variety and can be found throughout the city. Even the smallest and most insignificant structure is covered in intricately-wrought bas reliefs and hieroglyphics. These are beautiful works of art but extremely repellent in subject matter, depicting various blasphemous rites and noxious ceremonies. The DM is encouraged to foster a feeling of insignificance and inferiority in the PCs as they explore this last remnant of an obviously much more advanced civilization.

City Encounters

PCs who enter the Black Tower find the interior hollow save for a spiraling ramp that descends into darkness. The PCs must descend hundreds of feet to reach its base, which opens up into the vast cavern containing the remnants of the city.

1. Black Tower.

You have no trouble entering the Black Tower, the inside of which is hollow and empty save for a 20-foot-wide spiraling ramp that descends into darkness. Tendrils of steam rise from the depths.

PCs with the ability to fly or climb can explore the top of the tower, but there is nothing to see but the occasional open window through which the steam exits. Because the walls are made of smooth, wet obsidian, climbing them is difficult without a *spider climb* or similar spell. (See the Climb skill check description in the *Player's Handbook* for modifiers.) If the PCs descend the ramp, read or paraphrase the following:

The ramp finally terminates at a solid stone floor. Set into the stone wall ahead is a cyclopean doorway, beyond which lies a colossal stone city constructed of the same monstrous blocks of dark stone as the tower.

Walking slowly out of the tower, you find yourselves in a vast square or plaza. Four roads, constructed of flagstones each the size of a small cottage, radiate from the tower. A thin layer of black sand grinds under your boots, barely audible above the chatter of a stream to the west. The mist that clings near the roof of this cavern glows with a lurid red light, the reflection of a huge fire burning to the south.

2. Baths.

This dilapidated building is mostly free of ice. The shattered remnants of tile mosaics that originally covered the walls lie in drifts about the floor. The deep, square pits set in the floor indicate that this building was perhaps a bath house. These pits are now filled with noxious, murky water. Your light reflects on the ripples of the water, creating bizarre and unsettling patterns on the walls. From somewhere in the dim, unlighted reaches of the building, a furtive splashing reaches your ears.

These were once the baths of the faranth, continually supplied with warm water from an ingenious set of pipes that led up from the bowels of the earth. Drained before the mass hibernation, they have now filled with near-freezing runoff from the glacier. Any PC courageous enough to take a dip in these frigid waters must make a successful Fortitude saving throw or be overcome with hypothermia, with effects identical to those described in the "Raker Asylum For the Mad" section. Any PC who searches the pools and makes a successful Search check (DC 15) finds the **Treasure**.

PCs who explore the back of the building come upon a colony of small, white, eyeless lizards. These creatures were also recently freed from hibernation and have taken up residence here. They are harmless and flee through a crack in the wall if approached.

Treasure: At the bottom of one pool rests a finely carved golden armband crafted by the faranth. It could fetch up to 250 gp at a jeweler's shop.

3. Hanging Gardens.

The interior is divided into several rooms, the walls of each lined with metal scaffolding. From the scaffolding hang thousands of pots and vessels, dead vegetation trailing limply from each one. At the center of each of the visible rooms are water gardens, once featuring fountains and waterfalls but now choked with dead plant life.

The scaffolding is made of some sort of preternaturally hard metal, more than a match for any tool the PCs might apply to it. The collection of dead vegetation is vast in scope, comprised of tens of thousands of different species of flowers, ferns, mosses, trees, and vines. In all this variety, however, the PCs (even druids or rangers) are unable to find a single familiar plant.

4. Eating Area.

The interior of this building forms one cavernous room. The walls and ceiling lie huddled in darkness, beyond the reach of your light. The floor of the building is lined with rows of stone tables. Propped around these tables are curious chairs or stools, each a concave disk about three feet across and supported by a thin spindle of stone. Rising up in the middle of the room is a 12-foot-tall obsidian sculpture of a demonic humanoid, its body composed of screaming, fanged heads.

The kitchens were contained in another building and the food conveyed to this location by the faranth's slaves. The hideous sculpture depicts some forgotten demon. Any good-aligned PC who touches the sculpture defiles it, causing the fanged heads to writhe in silent agony. An instant later, two of the heads erupt from the statue and transform into shrieking vargouilles that attack anyone in the building. The statue does not radiate magic.

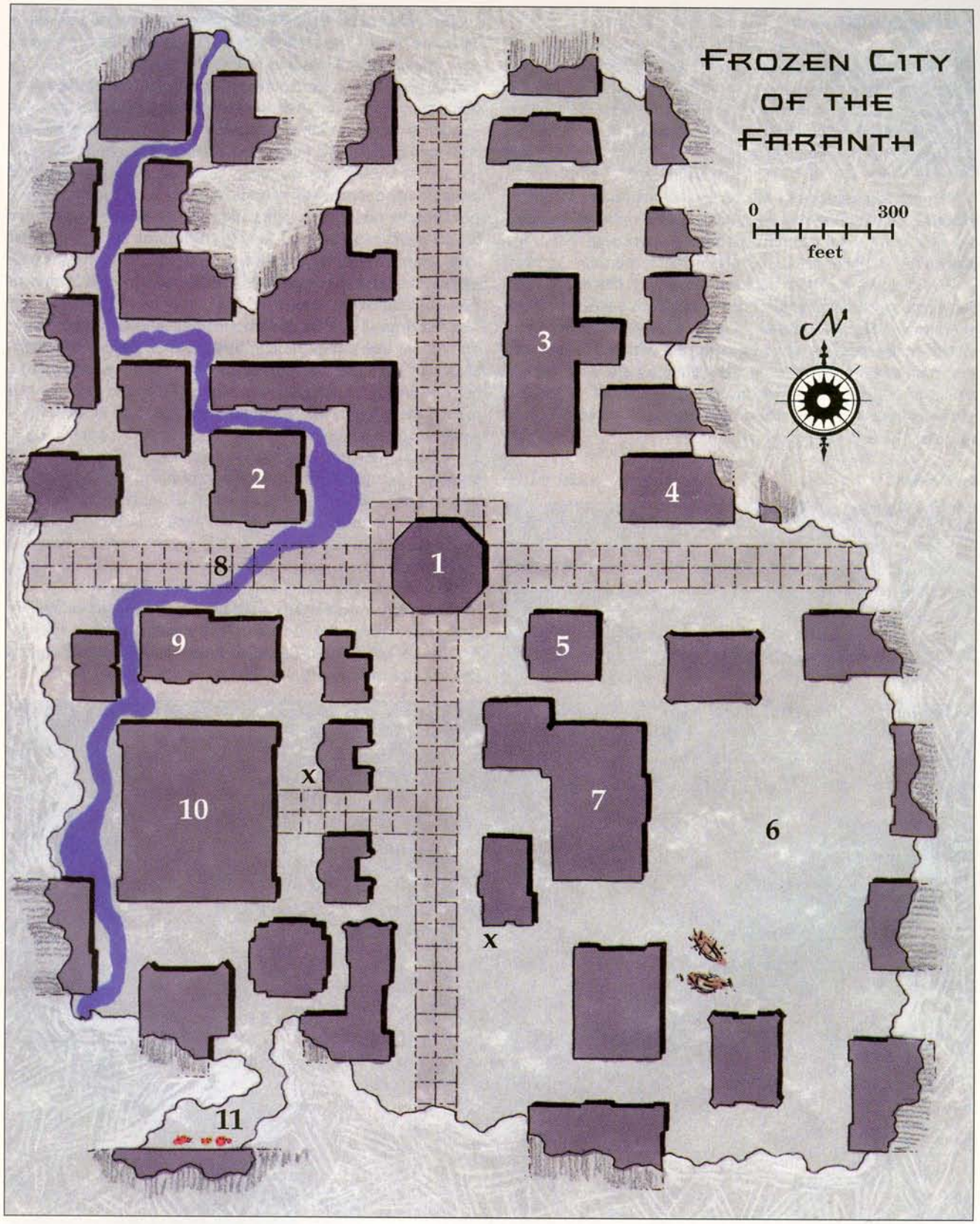
Creatures (EL 3): Two vargouilles are summoned the first time a good-aligned creature touches the statue. This occurs once, after which the statue can be touched normally. The vargouilles use their shriek ability on the first round.

Vargouilles (2): CR 2; Small Outsider (Evil) (2-ft. wingspan); HD 1d8+1; hp 8, 6; Init +1 (Dex); Spd fly 30 ft. (average); AC 12 (+1 size, +1 Dex); Atk +3 melee (1d4 and poison, bite); SA shriek, poison, kiss; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3. *Feat:* Weapon Finesse (bite).

SA—Shriek (Su): Instead of biting, a vargouille can open its distended mouth and emit a terrible shriek. Those within 60 feet (except other vargouilles) who both hear the shriek and can clearly see the creature must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 12) or be paralyzed with fear until the monster attacks them, flies out of range, or leaves their sight. If the save succeeds, the opponent cannot be affected again by that vargouille's shriek for one day.

SA—Poison (Ex): Anyone bitten by a vargouille must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 12) or be unable to heal the bite damage naturally or magically. A *neutralize poison* or



heal spell removes the effect, while a *delay poison* spell allows magical healing.

SA–Kiss (Su): A vargouille can kiss a paralyzed target with a successful melee touch attack. The affected opponent must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 19) or begin to transform, as described in the *Monster Manual*. The transformation is interrupted by sunlight (or a *daylight* spell), but reversing it requires a *cure disease* spell.

5. Living Quarters.

This relatively small building, a mere 150 feet square or so, appears to have seen some recent use. The gravel and black sand has been swept from the doorway on the west wall, and scratch marks on the hard floor attest to the recent removal of the furniture. Within, all is dark.

The original purpose of this building is impossible to determine. Investigation reveals seventeen bedrolls along the northern wall and a small campfire pit constructed nearby. Scraps of food lie scattered about, but there are no vermin.

This building has been commandeered by the doctor and the inmates as a sleeping place for the humans while they work on thawing the ice. A search of the bedding shows the same sort of mementoes as were found in the bedding in the asylum, such as buttons, small animal teeth, and the like. There is a pair of bedrolls set off from the rest, both of which are neatly laid out and clean. These are the doctor's and Shaver's bedrolls. There is nothing of value here.

6. Shipyard.

The buildings give way to an immense plaza, wherein the dim, reflected light of the fire to the south illuminates several large hulks in the southeastern part of the plaza. They are not moving, but they lack the geometric symmetry of the other buildings in the city. The plaza is cobbled with more colossal flagstones, and several curious metal rings, each about two feet across, protrude from the floor of the square.

This plaza was originally a landing spot for the massive faranth airships. The metal rings in the ground were for tethering the airships when they were not in use.

The two hulks in the southeast are destroyed airships. It is difficult to determine what they originally looked like, as their wooden structures did not survive the millennia with the same resilience as the stone buildings. Evidence of huge gas bags still remains, however, as do many curious metal fittings and examples of obscene scrollwork.

Near the two airship hulks, PCs can find what appears to be the remains of a third airship. Nearly all traces of wood have been stripped from it, however, leaving only the gas bag, rigging, and metal components. The wood has been taken to the work site to the south.

Creatures (EL 2): As soon as the PCs move to investigate one of the hulks, they notice movement in the southwestern corner of the square. A mule-drawn cart, accompanied by five heavily dressed people, enters the plaza and begins moving toward the hulks in the southeast. This group of inmates have come to retrieve more wood for the fires to the south.

Mule (1): CR 1; Large Animal (5 ft. tall, 6 ft. long); HD 3d8+3; hp 17; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d4+3/1d4+3, hooves); Face 5 ft. × 10 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +7, Spot +7.

Inmates, Male and Female Human Com1 (5): CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid (5-6 ft. tall); HD 1d4-1; hp 3 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +0 melee (1d3 subdual, fist); AL CN; SV Fort +1 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +0, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +3 (includes Alertness feat), Search +4, Spot +3 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Great Fortitude.

Tactics: The inmates will not notice the PCs unless they approach the area where they are collecting wood. If they notice the PCs, the inmates do nothing but silently wait for their approach. If the PCs appear dangerous or make threatening gestures or comments, the inmates flee and try to return to the work site.

The inmates know little about why they have been brought here. They are aware only that they must collect more wood for the big fire in the south, so that "our friends can get out." They know nothing more regarding their task. If asked who brought them here and who is making them work at the fire, they say that Dr. Asworth is in charge of the operation.

Feel free to invent colorful personalities for these NPCs and roleplay them to the hilt, generally making attempts at interrogation difficult for the PCs.

7. Airship Hangar.

This building is tall even by the standards of the rest of this immense city. The metal double doors are on such a scale as to defeat estimation, but you think that they might be as high as 200 feet. The prospect of opening such doors would be laughable, but you notice that the left one is open just enough for you to squeeze through.

The building interior is solidly packed with ice, a small melted corridor affording just enough room to pass inside. The light of the PCs' torch or lantern reflects weirdly off the walls of this tunnel, and for a moment they can glimpse through the ice to see what lays beyond. Deep within the building, cloaked in shadow, are huge wooden structures suspended from the ceiling below great bloated bags of some sort of fabric or leather. The structures resemble vast ships, their prows carved in the likeness of unwholesome creatures. Their alien limbs seem to twitch and writhe in the torchlight.

There is little here of practical value to the PCs other than further evidence of the vast powers of this lost civilization at its peak. If any of the PCs entertain thoughts of excavating one of the airships for their own use, they should be reminded that not only are the airships locked behind hundreds of yards of solid ice but that they doubtlessly are powered and navigated by a type of magic alien to them.

8. Stream. A 15-foot-wide stream flows from the north end of the ice-free section of the city to the south end. It is fed by melting glacial ice and, as such, is extremely cold. Unless the PCs devise an ingenious method of bridging the stream, they will have to wade across it. Doing so requires a Fortitude saving throw to avoid the effects of hypothermia, as detailed in the "Raker Asylum For the Mad" section.

9. Machinery Plant.

The interior of this building is free of ice. Through the doorway, you glimpse enormous metal cylinders standing in ranks, with an intricate webbing of pipes forming a complex spiderweb. Graceful metal catwalks stretch from wall to wall. A strange, harsh smell fills the building, and a rumbling so low as to be nearly inaudible reaches your ears from within.

This is one of many plants that provided heat and energy for the city's homes and factories. The machinery is now dormant, awaiting the return of the faranth. The exact principles involved in the plant's operation are so advanced compared to the technology of the Flanaess as to be beyond the comprehension of most characters, even those with engineering skills and experience.

If the PCs expore this building, allow them to make a Search skill check (DC 15). On a successful roll, they discover a valuable clue. Hidden beneath a complex lattice of tubing and wires are a strange pair of body prints on the floor. They look like black slimy stains in the shape of large, bulbous lizards or toads. They are about 10 feet long and 5 feet wide.

The two faranth that came to the asylum 3 weeks ago were caught here when the faranth sorcerer-priest invoked his power and brought the great sleep upon his people. Struck down where they stood, these faranth slept away the eons underneath the tubing and machinery of the energy plant, only to awaken when the thawing of the ice freed them from their imprisonment.

10. Temple.

This building is immense. The path to the doors is flanked on either side by vast shrines, each supporting a massive statue. The carvings are easily 100 feet tall and represent some sort of shapeless creature or entity. Carved in black obsidian, they strike a primitive chord in your minds, giving you feelings of superstitious awe and eldritch horror.

The outer walls of the building are formed by columns carved in grotesque shapes, supporting a roof composed of a solid piece of stone at least 300 feet across. Through the gaps between the columns, you can see that the interior of the building is empty but for an ornate dais in the center of the floor, atop which rests a great, angular black stone.

If the PCs enter the temple, they discover that the entire floor is composed of a vast tile mosaic, breathtaking in its complexity. If anyone takes the time to give it a thorough examination, they come to realize that, if viewed in the proper sequence, it forms a story. Read or paraphrase the following:

Your light does not illuminate a wide enough radius to encompass the entire mosaic, but what you can see chills you in a way the mere cold cannot. Loathsome murals depict unspeakable creatures engaged in vile ceremonies.

It takes 2 hours to decipher the mosaic. If this is done, the DM should paraphrase the history of the faranth as revealed in the "Adventure Background."

The mosaics immediately surrounding the dais are worked into four distinct panels. The first panel depicts lines of faranth slaves in shackles being led up to the Slave Stone. The second shows one of the glutinous horrors touching the Stone with an outstretched tentacle. The third shows the shackles being removed and cast away, while the fourth depicts the noisome creature dancing vilely while playing a song on its pipes.

The Slave Stone sits atop the dais: a jagged piece of black obsidian standing 20 feet high. Any PC approaching within 20 feet must make a successful Will saving throw or be drawn toward the stone. See "The Slave Stone" sidebar for details.

The Slave Stone

The Slave Stone is a minor artifact created by the sorcerer-priest of the faranth to exert control over its subjects when the rest of the faranth civilization was falling into decay. Faced with the prospect of losing everything to chaos, it imbued a vast piece of obsidian with tremendous powers of mind control.

The Stone is 20 feet high and rough in shape, resembling nothing so much as a great obsidian arrowhead jutting from the ground. Strange colors seem to swirl across its surface, and anyone looking too closely glimpses the hint of something shining deep inside.

Anyone approaching within 20 feet of the Slave Stone is the target of a *suggestion* spell. PCs failing a Will saving throw (DC 17) are compelled to approach the Stone and touch it.

If a PC touches the stone, he or she becomes the focus of a modified *charm monster* spell. This spell functions in a manner similar to the arcane spell except that the duration is permanent and no saving throw is allowed.

Once a PC has been enslaved by the Stone, he or she feels compelled to do everything possible to aid the faranth. This PC does not feel enmity toward his or her companions, but, if forced to choose between them and the faranth, he or she sides with the latter.

The only way to free enthralled companions from the Slave Stone's power is to shatter it. The Slave Stone has a Hardness of 8 and 80 hit points. It is impervious to fire, cold, and electricity. Only weapons made of metal or stone harm it; wooden weapons shatter and break if used against the Stone.

Charmed creatures are instantly aware of attacks against the Slave Stone and move as quickly as possible to defend the Stone from harm. The surviving faranth, plus any others that have been freed from the ice, also arrive as quickly as possible to protect the Stone.

When reduced to 0 hit points, the Slave Stone shatters, sending needle-sharp shards in all directions. Any PC within 30 feet must make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 14) or suffer 2d4 points of damage.

Once the Slave Stone is destroyed, all *charmed* creatures are set free with clear memories of the time they were enslaved.

11. Work Site.

A huge row of bonfires burns against a wall of ice, hissing and sputtering like a pit of snakes. Surrounding the fires is a group of people who are scampering madly to throw more sticks and pieces of lumber onto the fire. They are a motley group, but four individuals catch your eye. One is a huge, muscle-bound man easily 7 feet tall, wearing an inmate's uniform. Another wears a smock similar to that of the doctor at the Asylum. The last two men wear plain peasant clothes rather than uniforms and look remarkably alike, though one appears to be twice the age of the other. Their crazed cavorting brings to mind illustrations of dancing demons.

As you watch, a huge sheet of ice flakes off from the wall and shatters on the floor, making the ground tremble. The rift in the ice reveals a wall of black stone, its surface broken by the edge of a blocked doorway. The figures before the fire pull back and part, and through their midst crawls a creature resembling a toad the size of an ox, with black, slippery skin. In place of a head, however, it has a ring of black tentacles with scarlet suckers. It writhes its tentacles in a series of horrifying undulations, and the humans recoil.

With a series of sickening lurches, the creature drags its grotesque bulk to the newly revealed doorway. Waving its tentacles excitedly, it examines the mosaics there. Leaning back on its haunches, the beast draws forth a set of pipes and emits a series of ear-piercing whistles. The workers immediately sprint forward and begin stacking wood around the doorway while the monster withdraws once again into the shadows.

Inmates from the asylum are busy tending to the fires. The four men described in the boxed text are Hubert, a huge but gentle inmate of the Asylum; Shaver the custodian; and the two missing stonemasons whom the PCs have come to find.

The doorway into the Imperial Palace has just been uncovered. The faranth and its thralls are distracted and will not notice the PCs until they approach within 30 feet or do something overt.

The difficulty in this encounter lies in eliminating the threat without harming any of the inmates, the two missing stonemasons, or Shaver. Good-aligned PCs need to come up with a plan to do away with the menace without harming the humans.

Creatures (EL 4, +1 for the faranth, +2 for Dr. Asworth): The number of inmates present depends on whether the PCs encountered the five inmates at area **6**. If they subdued the inmates there, reduce the number of inmates here accordingly.

If Dr. Asworth fled the asylum and eluded the PCs, he is also present. Once he becomes aware of the PCs, he orders Shaver and the inmates to attack, allowing him to flee the area and hide elsewhere in the city.

The faranth is intelligent and avoids combat, ordering the humans with waves of its tentacles to surround and protect it. Only at the last resort does it put itself in harm's way. Use the statistics for the faranth on the adjacent page.

Inmates, Male and Female Human Com1 (14 or 9): CR 1/2; Medium Humanoid (5-6 ft. tall); HD 1d4-1; hp 3 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk -4 melee (1d8/crit ×3, shortspear) or +0 melee (1d3 subdual, fist); AL CN; SV Fort +1 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref +0, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +3 (includes Alertness feat), Search +4, Spot +3 (includes Alertness feat). *Feats:* Alertness, Great Fortitude.

Hubert, Male Human Com3: CR 2; Medium Humanoid (7 ft. tall); HD 3d4+12 (includes Toughness feats); hp 20; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk -1 melee (1d8+3/crit ×3, shortspear) or +3 melee (1d3+3 subdual, fist); AL NG; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +5, Listen +3, Spot +3. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Toughness (×2).

Shaver, Male Human Com2: CR 1; Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 1 in. tall); HD 2d4; hp 6; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk -2 melee (1d8+1/crit ×3, shortspear) or +2 melee (1d3 subdual, fist); AL LN; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Heal +4, Listen +5 (includes Alertness feat), Search +5, Spot +4 (includes Alertness feat), Use Rope +3. *Feats:* Alertness, Skill Focus—Heal.

Jacob & Larion Mason, Male Human Exp2: CR 1; Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 2d6; hp 4, 7; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 9 (-1 Dex); Atk -3 melee (1d8/crit ×3, shortspear) or +1 melee (1d3 subdual, fist); AL LG; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills: Craft (stonemasonry) +7 (includes Skill Focus feat), Diplomacy +4, Listen +4, Profession (stonemason) +5, Spot +5, Swim +4, Wilderness Lore +4. *Feats:* Endurance, Skill Focus–Craft (stonemasonry).

Tactics: When so ordered by Dr. Asworth or the faranth, the human thralls arm themselves with strange curved spears wielded in ancient times by the faranth. Subdued PCs are taken to the Slave Stone in area **10**, *charmed,* and put to work clearing the ice. The human thralls are not proficient with the Faranthan spears and suffer a -4 penalty to their attack rolls.

The faranth can attack once with each of its forelegs and once with its tentacles. If it successfully hits a PC with its tentacles, it attempts to throw the PC into one of the bonfires. An opposed grapple check is required for the faranth to succeed. PCs thrown in the fire take 1d6 points of damage per round until the flames are doused.

Development: If the PCs are having too easy a time, assume that the inmates have freed more faranth trapped in the ice. These creatures might be lurking nearby or encountered by the PCs as they attempt to leave the city. One or more of the freed faranth might have a class or two (for example, a 2nd-level faranth sorcerer or 1st-level faranth rogue).

Concluding the Adventure

Once the threat of the faranth has been dealt with, the PCs have a chance to rest before considering the task of returning all of the inmates to the asylum. Shaver and the Masons assist in this task, and with their help and experience, the inmates are all returned without incident. Dr. Asworth, once having regained control over himself, is grateful to the PCs and offers them what assistance he can. He also gives them the healing potions from his laboratory to aid them in their travels. If the PCs rescued the missing stonemasons, their return to Wintershiven spells a happy reunion for Wohin and his family. The PCs will have gained the family's eternal gratitude and have at their disposal a team of talented stonemasons should they decide to build a keep at some point later in their careers. If they decide to present this tale to the Prelate of the Temple, they are met with the same reaction as Wohin: haughty disbelief and overt disdain. What the PCs decide to do about this is the matter of another adventure.

continued on page 80

Faranth

Large Aberration

Hit Dice:	4d8+8 (25 hp)
Initiative:	+4 (Improved Initiative)
Movement:	20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 10 ft.
AC:	14 (-1 size, +5 natural)
Attacks:	Tentacles +6 melee, 2 Claws +4 melee
Damage:	Claw 1d6+3
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Grab
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +8
Abilities:	Str 16, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 10
Skills:	Climb +6, Craft (any) +12, Hide +5, Knowledge (engineering) +12, Knowledge (any) +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +4, Search +8, Sense Motive +5, Spot +9.
Feats:	Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack.

Climate/Terrain: Any
Organization: Solitary, pair, or company (5-8)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: None
Alignment: Usually lawful evil
Advancement Range: 5-10 HD (Large); 11-18 HD (Huge)

The faranth are a race of grotesque creatures that once held dominion over most of the world but now reside in suspended animation beneath the ice of the Raker Mountains.

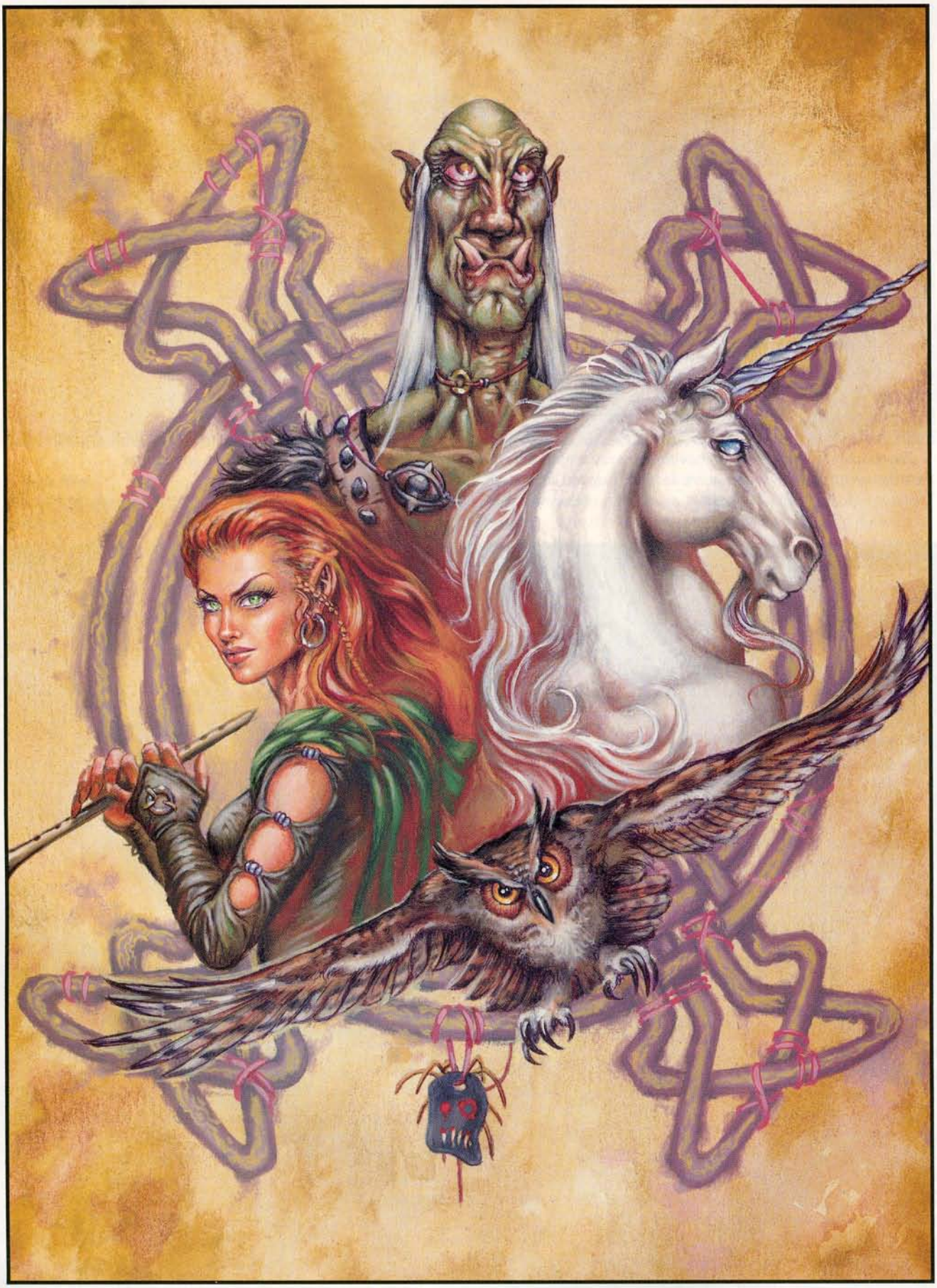
A faranth has slimy black skin and resembles a giant, lumpy toad. It gives the impression of being soft and gelatinous, like a soft leather bag full of entrails. In place of a head, the faranth has a ring of black, 6-foot-long tentacles lined with scarlet suckers. A faranth senses its surroundings by means of some unfathomable extra-sensory perception.

Faranth communicate by playing notes on curiously wrought pan flutes and silent gestures with their tentacles.

Combat

Because of their heightened intelligence, faranth can read the flow of a battle and anticipate an opponent's actions. This equates to having the Improved Initiative feat.

Grab (Ex): When a faranth makes a successful melee attack with its tentacles, make a grappling check. If the faranth successfully grapples its opponent, it may choose to deal 1d4+3 points of subdual damage or dash the poor victim against the ground for 2d6+3 points of damage.



Iriandel

Helping the Hornless

by Tito Leati

artwork by Ron Spencer, cartography by Diesel

"Iriandel" is a 3rd-Edition D&D adventure designed for four PCs of 4th-level, and the PCs should earn enough experience points (XP) to gain at least one level, possibly two. The adventure can be modified for characters of levels 2-9 as noted in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar. The party should include a character who can turn undead. A ranger with several ranks in the Wilderness Lore skill would be helpful but is not required. The PCs should possess one or more magic weapons.

Adventure Synopsis

To escape the rain, traveling PCs seek shelter in the remote halfling settlement of Pebbleton. There they meet the mayor, Jimi Jimepro, who tells them an interesting story about a horse he found while gathering wood in the nearby forest. Jimi also introduces the PCs to a bard named Ruallin, who has heard tales that the horse is actually a cursed unicorn named Iriandel (ee-RYE-en-dell). To free the unicorn from its curse and its mortal form, the PCs must locate the burial place of the legendary barbarian lord Tamaich and retrieve the unicorn's missing horn, which, according to legend, was transformed into a magic spear and buried with Tamaich's earthly remains. Touching the spear to the horse should end the curse and restore Iriandel's true form and immortality.

The adventure moves from Pebbleton to the surrounding wilderness as the PCs search for the barbarian king's ancient barrow. Along the way they encounter a tribe of orcs and ogres led by a half-ogre cleric named Yventhu. Depending on how events unfold, Yventhu might help or hinder the PCs in their quest.

Beginning the Adventure

While traveling across country in late autumn, the PCs are caught in a rainstorm. The visibility is low, and the PCs quickly become soggy and cold. Suddenly they notice a drenched wooden palisade and a gate. The PCs are stopped by a pair of sentinels standing atop the wall. The guards are halflings armed with shortbows. If the PCs ask for shelter, the sentinels let them in only after inspecting their belongings. "We must guard against marauding creatures of evil," they say if questioned about their cautious disposition. "Orcs are never far away this time of the year, you know."

If the PCs seem friendly, the guards allow them inside. The guards suggest that the PCs see the mayor at once, since it's customary for the mayor to greet all newcomers. (The guards can provide directions to the mayor's cottage.) Once past the gate, the heroes see a small village of fifty families, mostly woodcutters, living in small cottages. A handful of rain-drenched halfling shepherds watch the PCs quizzically while they herd their sheep and goats into small barns.

Shortly after knocking on the door of the mayor's cottage, the PCs are greeted by a halfling with silver hair and a neatly trimmed beard. See "Meeting Jimi and Treetrot" below.

Pebbleton (Fortified Hamlet): Conventional; AL LG; 100-gp limit; Assets 500 gp; Population 320 (79% halfling, 9% human, 5% gnome, 3% elf, 2% half-orc, 1% half-elf, 1% dwarf).

Authority Figure: Jimi Jimepro (mayor), halfling male Com3.

Important Characters: Cailee Merriweather (priestess of Yondalla), female halfling Clr5; Demini Whistlefoot (Captain of the Guard), male halfling War3; Ruallin, female half-elf Brd4.

Others: Sergeants of the guard, War2 (×6); Guards, War1 (×30); Exp2 (×5); Exp1 (×15); Rog2 (×4); Rog 1 (×6); Clr2 (×4); Com1 (×246).

Notes: Pebbleton's main industries are woodcutting, forestry, farming, and shepherding. The village is enclosed by a 10-foot-high wooden palisade with a pair of sturdy, barred wooden doors to the west and east.

Sturdy Wooden Door, Barred: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 40; Break DC 23.

Meeting Jimi and Treetrot

The halfling mayor, Jimi Jimepro, welcomes the PCs to Pebbleton and to his modest home. If the PCs ask him about the apprehensive behavior of his guards, he shrugs his shoulders and says that orcs and other monsters sometimes descend from the nearby hills to steal livestock. He apologizes if the guards treated the heroes rudely.

The PCs have caught Jimi in the middle of a meal, and he invites them to join him or warm their feet by the fire. The rain

Scaling the Adventure

Although this adventure is designed for 4th-level PCs, the module can be modified for 2nd- to 9th-level PCs by adjusting the strength and number of foes. The "Encounter Level Table" at the end of the adventure lists the encounter levels for all of the encounters. Use this as a baseline for modifying the adventure in the manner suggested below:

2nd- to 3rd-level PCs: The DM can run the adventure as written, but PCs will find it very challenging. A party that doesn't know when to flee will probably suffer some fatalities. Leave the traps as they are, but adjust hostile encounters with an EL of 6 or higher to make them easier (by reducing the number and/or strength of the opponents or by imposing certain limitations on the creatures). For example, change the wights in area 14 to shadows and confine the wraith to area 16 so that it can't chase fleeing PCs.

5th- to 6th-level PCs: PCs of these levels will still find the adventure quite challenging. Consider adding a few extra (minor) creatures to the EL 1 and El 2 encounters and toughening a few of the traps. For instance, the 30-foot-deep pit in area 4 could be lined with spikes, or the dancing blades trap in area 9 might include a few more swords.

7th-level PCs: PCs of this level will find the adventure, as written, quite easy. Look for ways to make the EL 1 to EL 4 encounters tougher. For instance, the four Small earth elementals in area 5 (an EL 4 encounter) could be replaced with four Medium-size elementals (making it an EL 7 encounter).

8th- to 9th-level PCs: This adventure was not written to challenge PCs of this level. You might want to replace the ogrillons in the adventure with ogres or add a few more traps to Tamaich's barrow (*glyphs of warding*, for example).

If you increase the challenge of the adventure, you must also increase the amount of treasure to preserve the challenge-to-treasure ratio. This adventure has approximately 32,400 gp worth of treasure (discounting Turiew's spear). To determine the right amount of treasure for higher- and lower-level parties, multiply 8,100 by the party's starting level. Thus, when modifying the adventure for a party starting at 2nd-level, make sure that the adventure has about 16,200 gp (8,100 × 2) worth of treasure (coins, goods, and items).

ends shortly after the PCs arrive in Pebbleton. As the sky begins to clear, Jimi invites them to accompany him to his stable. There the PCs notice a large, gray-maned horse with a white spot on its forehead. Upon seeing the heroes, the horse jumps wildly inside its stall. Jimi introduces the stallion as Treetrot. If the heroes take an interest in Treetrot or ask Jimi why he wanted them to see the horse, the mayor tells them the unusual story of how he found the horse:

"I found Treetrot in the nearby woods almost a year ago. It was a cloudy day, and I was gathering some bundles of twigs to put on my cart. The weather was getting worse, but I decided to finish the job anyway. A hailstorm broke out just after the last bundle was stowed. I jumped over the driver's bench and hurried back, my pony straining under the weight of the full load.

"The hailstones were large and painful. I pushed the cart at top speed, cursing my imprudence. Suddenly, lightning struck a nearby tree, splitting it to the roots. My pony was terrified and bolted into the woods. A wheel on the cart broke, and I was thrown to the ground. My pony broke free and ran away. I tried to pursue, but it was futile. Soon I was completely lost in the storm. As I stumbled blindly through the woods, searching for the trail, I noticed a horse standing calmly in the hail. The animal started to trot away slowly, but I was able to follow it easily and, to my relief, it brought me straight home. I named my mysterious savior Treetrot and welcomed him in Pebbleton.

"The horse has been our guest ever since. Treetrot's too big for me to ride, but he helps pull heavy loads. He's an old horse, but very strong and friendly.

"Wild horses are rare in these parts, and ever since that hailstorm I've wondered where the horse came from. Two weeks ago, I met a person who has a charming opinion about Treetrot. She's a half-elf and seems to know a lot of tales. I told her Treetrot's story, and she wanted to see the horse immediately. If you'd like, I can introduce her to you."

If the PCs cast a *speak with animals* spell on Treetrot, they learn that it has normal animal intelligence. However, the horse is bright and can respond to simple questions put to it by nodding or shaking its head. Any PC who approaches the horse and makes a successful Animal Empathy skill check (DC 12) gets the sense that Treetrot is unusual in some indeterminate way. The horse's eyes hold a certain wisdom, and its friendly demeanor seems uncharacteristic for such a spirited breed. There are no marks or brands on the horse to suggest where it might have come from, and Treetrot does not radiate magic if a *detect magic* spell is cast.

Once the PCs have seen Treetrot and heard Jimi's tale, the halfling mayor invites them to the common hall, where he hopes to find the half-elf bard, Ruallin.

Ruallin's Tale

The cottages and barns of Pebbleton have been built around a common hall dug from the tightly packed soil of an earthen mound and propped up by large wooden logs. The PCs have no trouble securing lodging, and they are welcome to warm themselves by the fire. (Halfling stablehands offer to take the PCs' mounts to the nearby stables.) The halflings who run the common hall do not charge the PCs for food or lodging, although donations to the local temple of Yondalla are always appreciated.

The common hall of Pebbleton is warm and comfortable. The following description can be read to the players:

Jimi leads you into a spacious room lit by a central hearth and many lanterns. Here the distant thunder and bleating sheep are banished by thick, earthen walls. The fireplace gives off a slightly sharp but pleasant smell of peat, mixed with the aroma of freshly baked bread and spicy stew. Halflings have gathered in the hall and sit around tables laden with dry fruit, buns, and cheese. Some of them wait eagerly in a queue before a smoking kettle, a tray of cookies, and a tun of ale.

In the far corner of the room stands a low stage. There a comely, red-haired, half-elven girl plays a melody on her flute, trying to tune up with two local drummers. Suddenly the halfling musicians lose their patience and go into a wild, rolling frenzy. The crescendo ends with a loud clash of brass cymbals, welcomed by a brief applause from the audience. The girl sighs deeply and looks elsewhere, eventually becoming aware of your presence. She smiles and jumps down from the stage to meet you.

The girl is Ruallin, a bard who entertains guests with songs and tales. Ruallin can play the flute well, but her preferred instrument is her voice.

If the PCs inquire about Treetrot, Ruallin shares a local elven tale:

"About three centuries ago, when this land was covered by a much larger forest and inhabited by a tribe of wild elves, the nearby plains were home to a clan of semi-nomadic riders called the Iorai. Even though the two peoples were not friends, elves and humans co-existed peacefully. The leader of the Iorai, Turiew, was handsome and strong. The elves had no single ruler, but they revered the guardian of their forest—a unicorn named Iriandel.

"One early summer day, Turiew was hunting in the woods. There he met Deleflin, a beautiful lady of the elven tribe. She was riding the noble Iriandel, which immediately bolted out of Turiew's sight. However, that brief encounter was enough for the human and the elf to fall in love.

"For three months, the two lovers saw each other only from afar, for their races were forbidden to mingle. The sylvan elves distrusted the proud Iorai, and Turiew's duty was to marry a woman of his people. Iriandel was worried about Deleflin's feelings and somewhat jealous of her human beloved, but he soon began to look at their deep and unusual affection with sympathy.

"With autumn came a horde of barbarians, the Sya-Negan. They were cruel humans whose blood had been mixed with that of orcs and ogres. The Sya-Negan rode horses and giant wolves. Their leader, Tamaich, was a powerful sorcerer and warrior. He wanted to drive out the Iorai, pillage their supplies, and spend the winter in their territory.

"Even though they were outnumbered, Turiew and his men prepared for battle. Tamaich challenged Turiew to a chieftains' duel to decide which people should leave the land. Turiew agreed to the duel despite rumors that Tamaich was invulnerable to mundane weapons and that no horse could approach him without taking fright. In the meantime, the elves had decided not to assist the Iorai, knowing that they would be safe in their forest and that the Sya-Negan would leave them be. Deleflin and Iriandel, however, decided to help Turiew. The elven lady, who was a priestess, asked her gods to give Turiew a suitable weapon and a fearless horse. Deleflin was granted the power to transform her unicorn friend: she took away Iriandel's horn and turned it into a magic, silver-tipped spear. In the same instant, the unicorn transformed into a strong, gray-maned horse. However, the chaotic elven gods established a dangerous condition: If spear and horse remained separated for more than three days, they would remain so for three centuries.

"Turiew was given his mount and weapon with a warning to return in three days. He said goodbye to Deleflin and went to confront his nemesis.

"The duel occurred at dawn. Turiew's steady mount was not frightened by the half-orc's presence and charged Tamaich. After a brief fight on horseback, both riders fell to the ground. Combat continued until the exhausted Turiew pierced Tamaich's chest with a fatal thrust. The half-orc died, but not before striking a final blow with his poisoned knife. Thus both chieftains lay on the ground, facing death. The Sya-Negan immediately attacked their enemies, and a great battle ensued. The outnumbered Iorai, though brave, were overcome and slaughtered by the barbarians. Turiew's spear remained on the battlefield and was captured by the victors. His horse fled toward the southern woods.

"The Sya-Negan burned the corpses of their enemies and buried their own. Through the cold winter, they covered the core of their fortified camp with earth and stones, raising an enormous barrow over their chieftain's mortal remains and treasures. This lengthy work was finished by the following spring, when the barbarians finally left the land.

"Deleflin was sunk in despair. Her beloved Turiew was dead, and Iriandel's spirit was torn from its body. The three-day limit to reunite spear and horse had elapsed. Some courageous elves who had attempted to recover the spear from the watchful Sya-Negan were slain. Deleflin's prayers to the elven gods went unheard, and the divine gift turned into a curse. Nothing would restore Iriandel's true form for at least three hundred years. Finally bent by guilt and sorrow, Deleflin left the world for the place where elves are immortal."

Ruallin thinks that Treetrot might be Iriandel transformed. She believes that bringing together Treetrot and Turiew's spear could make the unicorn whole again.

Ruallin's tale is true. The PCs can conclude that Turiew's spear has been buried with Tamaich. Heroes of good alignment might want to find the tomb of the half-orc chieftain to free Treetrot of its curse and restore Iriandel to his former self. The opportunity to plunder Tamaich's hoard should motivate PCs who care less about elven folk tales and more about ancient treasures.

If the PCs declare their intention to end the curse of Iriandel, they receive Jimi's best wishes and a week's worth of provisions. The mayor does not allow the PCs to take Treetrot with them, however, for he loathes the idea of parting with his beloved horse. He is also concerned that orcs (or worse) might injure the horse.

Jimi can give the PCs a description of the village surroundings as shown in the area map. The mayor describes the Brown Grounds as a large strip of peat-bogs running along the southern edge of the Poven Hills. The villagers do not know of the zone marked as the Knuckles, however, as the northern peat-bogs remain mostly unexplored by them.

Creature (EL 0): Ruallin the bard is friendly and does her best to avoid conflict. If confronted by someone who is hostile, she uses her *charm person* and *expeditious retreat* spells to best effect.

Ruallin, Female Half-elf Brd4: CR –; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 4d6; hp 13; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+3 Dex, *+1 ring of deflection*) or 15 (same as above,

with Dodge feat); Atk +3 melee (1d4/crit 19-20, dagger) or +6 ranged (1d4, sling); SQ bardic music, bardic knowledge (see *PH* for details); AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 17.

Skills: Balance +7, Concentration +4, Escape Artist +7, Gather Information +9, Listen +5, Perform +10, Pick Pocket +7, Tumble +8, Use Magical Device +7. *Feats:* Dodge, Mobility.

Spells (casts 3/3/1 per day, chosen from the following list of known spells): 0—*daze, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic;* 1st—*charm person, expeditious retreat, mage armor, silent image;* 2nd—*enthrall, glitterdust, sound burst.*

Possessions: +1 ring of deflection, dagger, sling with 20 bullets, silver medallion set with a white pearl (worth 120 gp), 28 gp in pouch.

Searching for the Barrow

The PCs learn that Tamaich's tomb is located somewhere north of Pebbleton, but nobody in Pebbleton has actually seen the enormous barrow described in Ruallin's tale, so its precise location remains unknown. The halflings often cross the grassy plains to harvest clods of peat at the border of the Brown Grounds. They have never gone too far into that orc-infested territory, though.

If the PCs look for the barrow in the Brown Grounds without any clue as to its whereabouts, they must comb the region systematically. Two encounters that might direct the PCs to Tamaich's tomb and speed up their search are described below. Any PC who wishes to gather more information about the region from the residents of Pebbleton can make a Gather Information skill check. What the PC learns depends on the roll:

- On a roll of 10 or better, the PC learns about the wood elves that dwell in the forest south of Pebbleton. See "Deleflin's Folk" below for more information.
- On a roll of 15 or better, the PC learns about the strange glyph carved into an oak tree east of Pebbleton. Rumor has it that the glyph is magical. See "Iriandel's Mark" below for details.

The northern plain is dotted by sparse trees and patches of undergrowth. Toward the mountains, the green grass gives way to brown peat-bogs. The landscape is always shrouded by a thin layer of fog. It takes one day to reach the peat-bogs from Pebbleton on foot. Tamaich's tomb lies amid the Knuckles, a region of the Brown Grounds so named by the humanoids living nearby.

You should determine exactly how long it takes for the heroes to find the barrow, depending on their actions and on factors such as the availability of spells or aerial scouts. With no clues, it should take not less than twelve days. You should discount one day out of every four if the PCs ride horses or ponies. (The mud from recent rain makes off-road mounted travel not much faster than walking.)

Deleflin's Folk

PCs searching for Tamaich's barrow might try to contact the wood elves who dwell in the forest south of Pebbleton. Halfling lumberjacks have seen small groups of elusive, green-clad elves on occasion, though only from a distance. PCs traveling through the woods have a 10% chance per hour of stumbling upon an elven hunting party. A PC with the Track feat can attempt to locate and follow the elves' tracks by making a successful Wilderness Lore skill check (DC 30), which increases the chance of encountering the elves by 15% per hour. Conversely, PCs who blow hunting horns or shout in Elven to draw the elves' attention increase the chance of an encounter by another 25% per hour.

Once the elves are aware of the party's presence, have each PC make a Spot skill check (DC 24). A successful roll indicates that the character has spotted an elf (one of several, in fact) hiding in the forest. Read or paraphrase the following once the elves reveal their presence:

> Lean shadows among the trees take the shape of several hooded archers. One of them steps out from hiding and slowly waves his gloved hand: a preemptory halt and a petition of peace in a single gesture. He greets your group in Common, speaking slowly and carefully. In the shadow cast by his hood you glimpse the green sparkle of elven eyes.

The elf introduces himself as Quelnef, but he does not drop his hood or come within arm's reach. He prefers speaking Elf to Common. If one or more PCs offer an elven greeting, he responds in kind, and any Diplomacy skill checks made by the PCs receive a +2 circumstance bonus.

Quelnef behaves suspiciously toward non-elven PCs, although any non-elven PC who makes a successful Diplomacy skill check (DC 23) can allay his suspicions. If the PCs recount Ruallin's tale, he confirms everything. Quelnef adds sadly that, in the centuries after the disappearance of Iriandel, his tribe has shrunk like the forest itself. The northern woods were partially destroyed by the Sya-Negan, who knew that their leader had been killed by elven magic. Quite predictably, Quelnef blames Deleflin for involving his people in human affairs. The wood elves still dream of the return of Iriandel but think that this will not happen "until the time is right." They will not leave their forest to help the PCs. These wood elves are obviously a reclusive bunch still embittered toward foreign troublemakers.

Quelnef says only that the tomb of Tamaich lies somewhere in the northern plains "where the soil is brown by peat-bogs," and that the barrow is so large that "any shortsighted human or dwarf mole can find it walking straight north from here." (Quelnef does not apologize for his racial bias. His low regard for non-elves is shared by most of his peers.)

Quelnef's directions are useful, but only if his words are taken literally. If the PCs head north and stay on course—requiring a successful Intuit Direction skill check (DC 15) each day—they find Tamaich's tomb after four days of travel.

Creatures (EL 9): Quelnef is the leader of this elven hunting party. He is protected by three wolf companions who remain hidden in the bushes until called.

Quelnef, Male Elf Drd3/Ftr2: CR 5; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 3d8 (Drd) plus 2d10 (Ftr); hp 33; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+2 Dex, +3 natural armor [from *barkskin* spell], +2 armor) or 18 (same as above, with Dodge feat); Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/crit 19-20, short sword) or +6 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ nature sense, woodland stride, trackless step; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills: Animal Empathy +5, Climb +4, Concentration +3, Craft (bowmaking) +4, Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +5, Heal +5, Hide +13 (includes +10 competence bonus afforded by *cloak of elvenkind*), Intuit Direction +5, Knowledge (nature) +4,

Swim +4, Wilderness Lore +5. *Feats:* Dodge, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Mobility.

SQ–Nature Sense (Ex): Quelnef can identify animals and plants with perfect accuracy. He knows whether water is safe to drink or dangerous.

SQ–Woodland Stride (Ex): Quelnef can move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at his normal speed without taking damage or other impairment.

SQ–Trackless Step (Ex): Quelnef leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked.

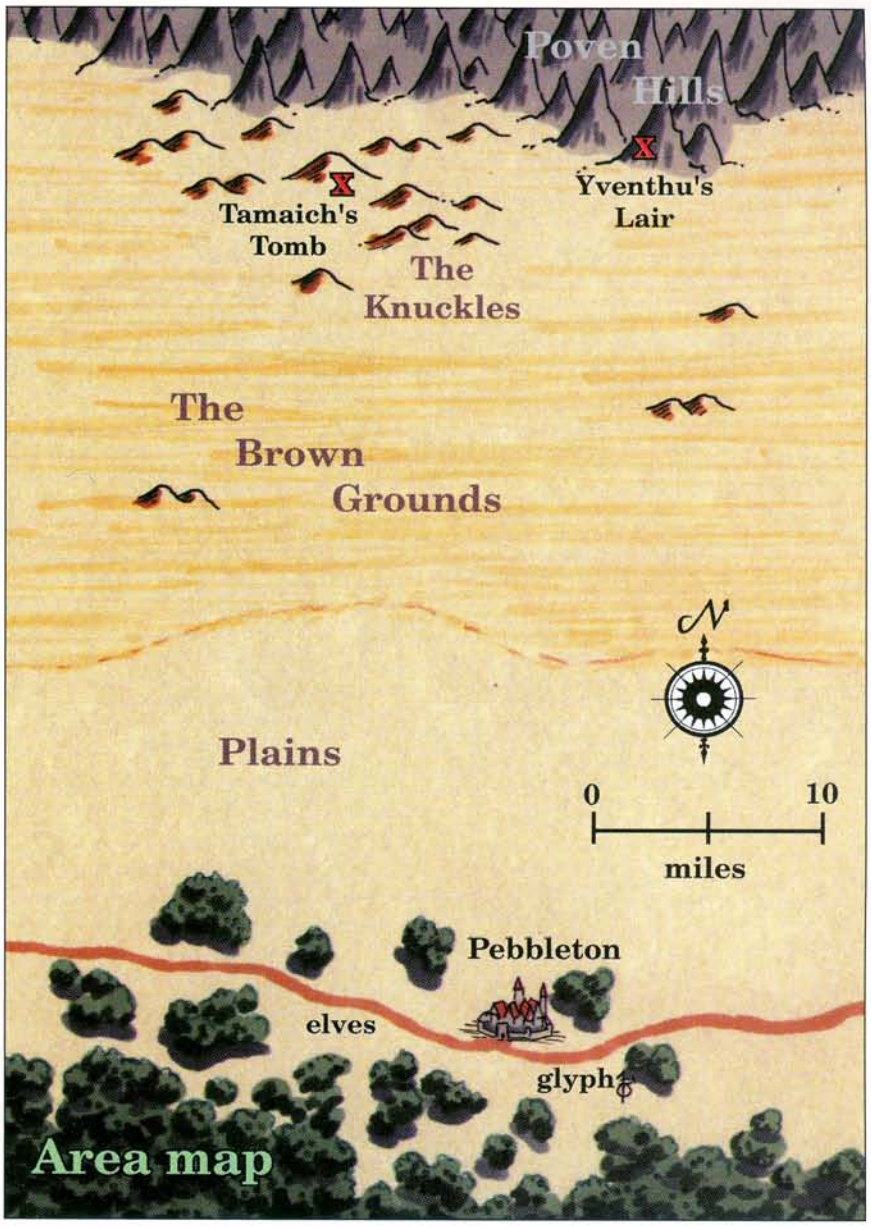
Spells (4/3/2): 0–*cure minor wounds, guidance, know direction, resistance;* 1st–*cure light wounds, entangle, obscuring mist;* 2nd–*barkskin, warp wood.*

Possessions: Leather armor, *cloak of elvenkind* (+10 competence bonus to Hide skill checks), shortbow, six masterwork arrows, twelve normal arrows, short sword.

Quelnef's Wolves (3): CR 1; Medium-Size Animal (4 ft. long); HD 2d8+4; hp 13 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, bite); SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +4, Spot +4. *Feat:* Weapon Finesse (bite).

SQ–Scent (Ex): Wolves can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet.



Wood Elf Hunters, Male and Female Elf Rgr1 (8): CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 1d10; hp 8 each; Init +2 (Dex); AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 armor); Atk +2 melee (1d6/crit ×3, handaxe) or +3 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SA fight with two weapons; SQ favored enemy (goblinoids); AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +3, Craft (bowmaking) +1, Hide +5, Intuit Direction +1, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Search +1, Spot +1, Swim +2, Wilderness Lore +1. *Feats:* Point Blank Shot, Track (bonus feat).

SA–Fight with Two Weapons (Ex): These rangers can fight with two weapons as if they had the Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting feats. When fighting with two handaxes, the rangers suffer a -2 penalty to each attack roll.

SQ–Favored Enemy (Ex): The wood elves gain a +1 bonus to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore skill checks when using these skills against goblinoids (including the Sya-Negan). They also get a +1 bonus to damage rolls against goblinoids, but only against targets within 30 feet.

Possessions: Leather armor, shortbow, six masterwork arrows, twenty normal arrows, two handaxes.

Iriandel's Mark

The two halfling musicians who play in the hall of Pebbleton remember something that could be connected to Ruallin's tale. Three months ago they were walking near the village, seeking artistic inspiration. They stopped by an old oak and started hitting the trunk rhythmically with their walking sticks to play "something out of nature itself." After a while they noticed an odd mark etched on the bark of the tree, "a beautiful glyph akin to elven runes, no more than two inches in diameter." The two halflings do not recall the glyph's exact location and, strangely, have never been able to find the mark again. "It looks like you can't find it intentionally, but only when seeking inspiration," they say with a giggle. "The oak grows east of the village for sure, and not more than five miles away."

Random Encounters

Several of the following encounters are with creatures allied to Yventhu the half-ogre adept. None of these creatures knows the precise location of the barrow, only that it lies in the desolate, hilly region known as The Knuckles. PCs who capture an orc, ogrillon, or ogre and make a successful Intimidate skill check (DC 10 + the target's HD) learn the following pieces of information:

- The low hills around Tamaich's tomb are haunted by ghosts. (Somewhat true.)
- Yventhu has forbidden everyone to delve too far into The Knuckles, a place belonging to the dead. The prohibited area is described as "a place where the sounds of an ancient battle can be heard at night." (True.)

If the PCs are not already heading straight for their destination, the DM should at least halve the time still required to reach Tamaich's tomb when the heroes decide to limit their explorations to the Knuckles.

Roll 1d12	Encounter
1-2	Orc thieves (EL 3)
3-4	Orc hunters (EL 3)
5-6	Ogres (EL 4)
7-8	Ogrillons (EL 5)
9-10	Wolves (EL 4)
11-12	Boars (EL 5)

Orc Thieves (6): CR 1/2; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8; hp 4 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 leather armor); Atk +2 melee (1d8+2/crit 19-20, longsword); or +0 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Feat: Alertness.

SQ–Light Sensitivity (Ex): Orcs suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Possessions: Leather armor, longsword, two javelins, sack of 2d20 sp.

These orcs are heading south to steal livestock from the pastures surrounding Pebbleton. The PCs find their camp during the day and have normal chances of surprising the two sentinels on watch. The orcs flee as soon as they become aware of the PCs. They speak Orc only.

Orc Hunters (6): CR 1/2; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8; hp 6 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+4 scale mail, +2 shield); Atk +2 melee (1d8+2/crit ×3, battleaxe); or +0 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Feat: Alertness.

SQ–Light Sensitivity (Ex): As above.

Possessions: Scale mail, large wooden shield, battleaxe, shortbow with 12 arrows, sack of 2d20 sp and 2d20 cp, flask containing three applications of huge spider venom (Injury DC 13; make a successful Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of temporary Strength damage; make a second save after 1 minute or take an additional 1d6 points of temporary Strength damage).

These orcs hunt in the peat-bogs. If the orcs have time to prepare, each one coats three of his arrows with venom. Dipping an arrow in poison is a partial move-equivalent action.

The orc hunters speak Orc and Giant well and Common poorly. They can lead the heroes to the half-ogre adept Yventhu if captured and questioned. If they deplete their poisoned arrows without killing or incapacitating any PCs, they withdraw. The orcs also flee if the PCs show combat superiority or cast a deadly area effect spell such as *fireball*.

Ogres (2): CR 2; Large Giant (10 ft. tall); HD 4d8+8; hp 26 each; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +5 natural, +3 hide armor); Atk +8 melee (2d6+7, huge greatclub); or +1 ranged (2d6+7, huge longspear); Reach 10 ft. (15 ft. with longspear); AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +5, Listen +3, Spot +3. Feat: Weapon Focus (greatclub).

Possessions: Hide armor, huge greatclub, huge longspear, huge sack containing 150 gp, 250 sp, and 400 cp.

These ogres are an independent pair who barely tolerate Yventhu's authority. They speak Giant and Orc and attack PCs on sight.

Ogrillons (4): hp 13 each; consult "Yventhu's Lair" for complete statistics.

These ogrillons serve Yventhu and are eager to fight, but they are held back by their leader–a half-ogre who tries to parlay with the PCs. The leader speaks Common, Giant, and Orc and introduces himself as Fadyhuk, Yventhu's subordinate. The half-ogre offers to guide the PCs to Yventhu's lair, as his master "knows a lot of things about his domains and might sell useful information." The half-ogre's offer is sincere, as any PC who makes a successful Sense Motive skill check (DC 20) can determine.

Fadyhuk, Male Half-ogre Adp1: CR 3; Medium-Size Humanoid (7 ft. tall); HD 2d8+6 (half-ogre) plus 1d6+3 (Adp); hp 23; Init -2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (-2 Dex, +2 natural, +4 chain shirt, +2 shield); Atk +6 melee (1d12+5/crit ×3, greataxe) or +0 ranged (1d8+6/crit ×3, *+1 longspear*); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL CN; SV Fort +8 (includes Great Fortitude feat), Ref -2, Will +5 (includes Iron Will feat); Str 20, Dex 7, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Concentration +4, Spellcraft +1, Wilderness Lore +2. *Feats:* Iron Will, Great Fortitude.

Spells (3/2): 0–*detect poison, guidance, resistance*; 1st–*cause fear, doom.*

Domain Spell (Chaos, Evil): 1st–*protection from good.* Fadyhuk casts Chaos and Evil spells as if 2nd level.

Possessions: Chain shirt, large wooden shield, greataxe, *+1 longspear.*

Wolves (6): hp 13 each; see "Deleflin's Folk" for complete statistics.

These beasts are descendants of the giant canine mounts once ridden by the Sya-Negan. They are voracious hunters and fight until half their numbers are slain, at which point they retreat.

Boars (3): CR 2; Medium-Size Animal (4 ft. tall); HD 3d8+9; hp 22 each; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+6 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d8+3, bite); SA ferocity; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 4.

Skills: Listen +8, Spot +5.

SA–Ferocity (Ex): A boar continues to fight without penalty even while disabled or dying; see "Injury and Death" in Chapter 8: Combat in the *PH*.

SQ–Scent (Ex): A boar can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet.

These boars, tamed by Yventhu, have tarnished silver spikes fitted over their tusks; these are purely ornamental and worth 25 gp each. The boars have been trained to attack any interlopers in the Brown Grounds.

The PCs can inspect the sparse woods east of Pebbleton looking for the oak tree and its mysterious glyph. After six hours of searching, the PCs find the old oak. Finding the 2-inch-tall glyph requires a successful Search skill check (DC 28), although PCs can take 20 on this roll and assist one another. The glyph is similar to an *arcane mark* and radiates Universal magic. A successful *dispel magic* cast upon the glyph permanently removes it; the dispel check is 1d20 +1 per caster level against DC 15.

Once the PCs find the glyph, an unusual creature shows up and commends the PCs:

"You observe well, good-hearted!" says a voice from above. Looking up, you see an owl hopping among the tallest branches of the great oak, watching you with an almost imperceptible look of amusement. "I am Tashek," he says haughtily. "Why have you come seeking Iriandel's mark?"

The talking bird is Tashek, a wise owl. If the heroes tell him about Ruallin's tale, Tashek is somewhat annoyed: "No mention is made of me!" he says. "No wingless bard can be trusted, then?" The talking owl, like the unicorn, is immortal. Once an acquaintance of Deleflin, he tried three centuries ago to dissuade her from helping Turiew. Tashek often complains about Deleflin's foolishness.

After the Sya-Negan defeated the Iorai, Tashek migrated far away and has returned only recently. If the PCs ask the owl about Tamaich's tomb, he can guide them directly there since he remembers the precise location of the Sya-Negan camp. If Tashek joins the heroes, he flies over them in the light hours and spends the night perched on the nearest tree. The bird can be an excellent scout and knows the history of the region. He is claustrophobic, however, and avoids subterranean places. As Tashek guides the PCs in an almost straight line, it takes just four days to reach Tamaich's tomb with the owl's assistance.

If asked about the origin of the glyph, the owl reveals that Iriandel would often sleep beneath the tree's great boughs. The unicorn allegedly made the glyph with the touch of its horn.

Creature (EL 0): You can use Tashek whether the heroes find Iriandel's mark or not. Tashek appears whenever the PCs accomplish some goal for the cause of good. For example, Tashek might show up if a PC cleverly stops an ensuing fight between the party and the wood elves. The owl never appears in an enclosed or subterranean place.

Tashek, Talking Owl: CR –; Tiny Animal; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 17 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +5 melee (1d4-2, claws); Face 2½ ft. × 2½ ft.; Reach 0 ft.; AL LG; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 6.

Skills: Knowledge (geography) +6, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (local) +6, Listen +6, Sense Motive +7, Spot +6. *Feat:* Weapon Finesse (claws).

The Brown Grounds

Orcs lairing in the Poven Hills are known to skulk about the peat bogs north of Pebbleton. Some are true descendants of the Sya-Negan, but they retain almost no memory of their past. Most of the humanoids that dwell in the Brown Grounds answer to a half-ogre adept named Yventhu, who resides north of the Brown Grounds in an abandoned quarry that was once used by the Sya-Negan to dig the stones needed to raise Tamaich's tomb. Yventhu's most loyal minions (ogres and ogrillons) have orders to lead powerful-looking strangers to his presence.

The PCs have one random encounter during the first day spent in the peat bogs. Each day thereafter, the PCs have a 50% chance of encountering something. (See the "Random Encounters" sidebar.) Each encounter occurs only once; if the same encounter is indicated a second time, roll again or choose another.

The heroes should have at least one random encounter with evil humanoids. This is necessary to justify the behavior of Yventhu's minions at the end of the adventure (as detailed in "Back To Pebbleton").

Yventhu's Lair

The heroes might stumble upon Yventhu's lair, or they might be led there by one of the roving bands of orcs and ogrillons prowling the Brown Grounds. If the PCs come in peace, Yventhu might speak with them and share information. If the PCs come looking for a fight, they find the half-ogre well prepared to defend himself. The rock quarry is also home to a company of ogrillons (the offspring of matings between orcs and ogres). These ogrillons live off the tributes of subordinate humanoid bands.

The following description can be read or paraphrased when the PCs reach Yventhu's lair:

You stand before a rocky canyon that once was a great quarry. Sheered stone walls are visible under a growing layer of dirt and vegetation.

The mouth of a large cave opens high on the rock wall at the north end of the valley. An uneven path of wooden steps and stone ramps leads up a steep slope to a natural stone platform set before the dark entrance. The skulls of hundreds of humanoids and beasts rest on the steps like primitive ornaments.

At least five ogrillons are on watch at all times: Two ogrillons stand on either side of the cave entrance, while three others patrol the quarry. Another seven ogrillons are sleeping in the cave and remain there until summoned by Yventhu.

Any orc, ogrillon, or ogre captured by the PCs does his best to alert the ogrillon guards as soon the PCs approach the quarry. When the ogrillon guards spot the PCs, Yventhu emerges from his cave and stands in the entrance, watching as the PCs approach.

If the heroes announce their desire to see Yventhu, they are escorted up the stairs to the mouth of the cave by the three ogrillons patrolling the quarry. The half-ogre adept emerges from his cave, guarded by the two ogrillons standing at the cave entrance. (An ogrillon that does nothing but guard cannot attack but provides a +2 circumstance bonus to Yventhu's AC.)

Yventhu appears as a venerable half-ogre with white hair, a big nose, and deep wrinkles in the corners of his eyes. His frail appearance is deceiving, however, for he is surprisingly strong and agile. Before meeting the heroes, he casts *bull's strength* and *entropic shield* on himself. The seven ogrillons inside the cave remain hidden from sight, ready to emerge and fight Yventhu's enemies.

Yventhu is smart enough to recognize powerful opponents and tries to deceive rather than fight such enemies. See **Creatures** below for details.

If combat breaks out in the quarry, Yventhu commands his ogrillons to kill the PCs and immediately retreats into the cave. He casts *bane* on the PCs (if the opportunity presents itself) and *resistance* on himself. He casts *obscuring mist* at the back of the cave and retreats down the narrow tunnel leading from his quarters to the outside. This passage is concealed behind a wicker chair and some ox skins hanging from wooden frames on the east wall. Should Yventhu escape, he gathers a force of orcs, ogrillons, and ogres and returns the next day to exact revenge. If he survives, the PCs meet him again at the conclusion of the adventure.

PCs who wish to scale the cliff face (rather than use the walkway that leads from the cave mouth to the quarry floor) must make a successful Climb skill check (DC 15); a new roll is required each time a PC must spend any portion of his movement action climbing the wall.

Inside the cave, PCs find the stinky sleeping quarters of Yventhu and his ogrillon bodyguards. The beds and walls are covered with deer skins and ugly hunting trophies.

In the southwestern section of the cave are three Medium-size iron cages, one containing a half-orc prisoner. (See **Creatures** below.) The other two are empty.

Treasure: Piled in the south corner of the cave are various tributes from nearby humanoid tribes: dry meat and fruit, three moldy wheels of cheese, a dozen wool rugs, hundreds of carved animal bones, a wooden chest containing 270 silver ingots (worth 10 gp each), and an old iron key that Yventhu might use to bribe the PCs (as detailed under **Creatures** below). A 3-foot-tall clay vase contains a live viper and 450 gp. The snake darts out to bite anyone who disturbs its rest.

Creatures (EL see below): Ogrillons are cruel, stupid creatures who enjoy hurting creatures smaller than themselves. Half-ogres have statistics similar to ogrillons; in addition to being a half-ogre, Yventhu is also a 4th-level adept (a more primitive type of cleric).

Also detailed below are Wuhlap, the caged half-orc prisoner, and Yventhu's pet viper.

The EL of this encounter varies, depending on how events unfold. If the PCs fight Yventhu and his ogrillons, treat this as an EL 10 encounter (very difficult). If the PCs negotiate with Yventhu and leave in peace, treat this as an EL 6 encounter. The viper in the cave is treated as a separate EL 1 encounter.

Ogrillons (12 total): CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (7 ft. tall); HD 2d8+4; hp 13 each; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+2 natural, +3 hide armor, +2 shield); Atk +6 melee (1d10+4, greatclub) or +1 ranged (1d8+4/crit ×3, longspear); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 8.

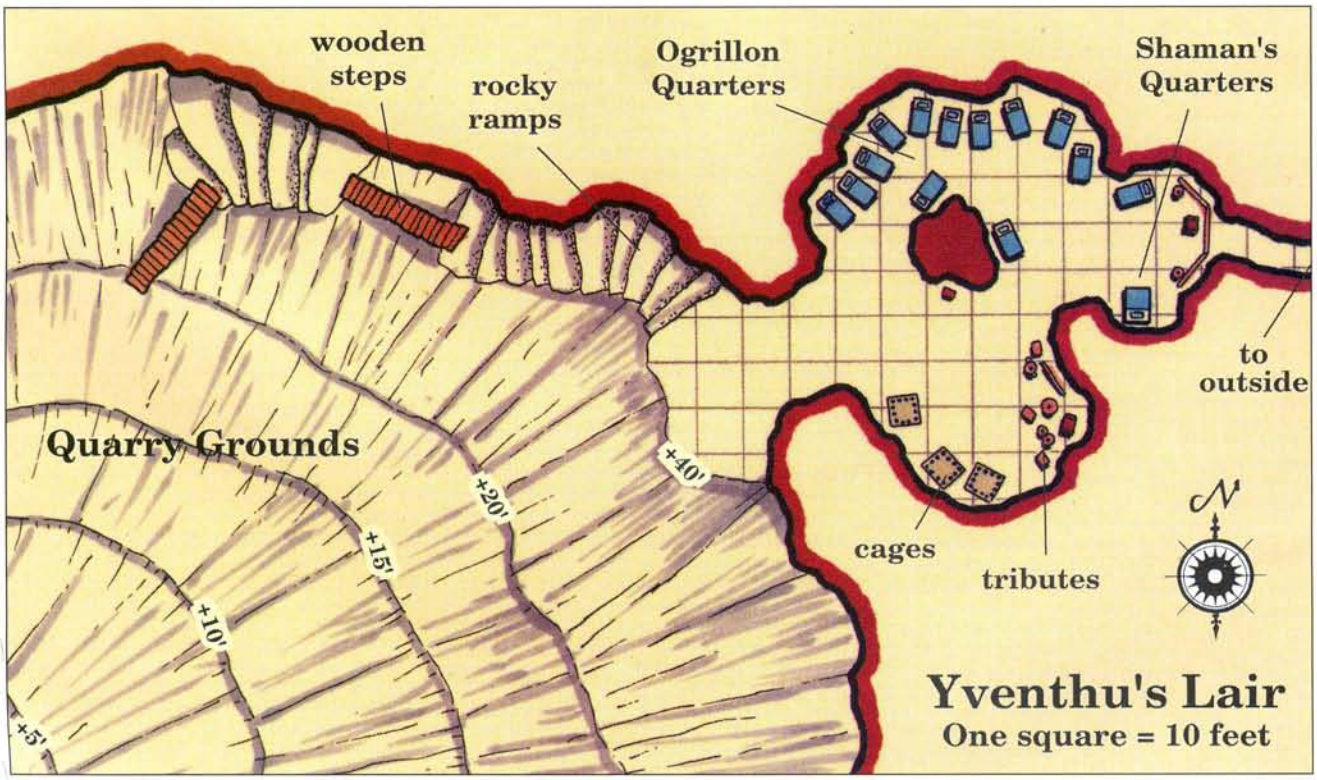
Skills: Climb +5, Listen +1, Spot +1. *Feat:* Weapon Focus (greatclub).

Possessions: Hide armor, large wooden shield, greatclub, longspear, sack containing 200 sp.

Yventhu, Male Half-ogre Adp4: CR 6; Medium-Size Humanoid (7 ft. tall); HD 2d8+4 (half-ogre) plus 4d6+8 (Adp); hp 40; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +4 chain shirt, +2 shield); Atk +7 melee (1d10+4, greatclub) or +3 ranged (1d8+4/crit ×3, longspear); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Spells (3/3/1): 0—*guidance, detect magic, resistance*; 1st—*bane, entropic shield, obscuring mist*; 2nd—*bull's strength*.

Domain Spells (Chaos, Evil): 1st—*protection from good*; 2nd—*shatter*. He casts Chaos and Evil spells as if 5th level.



Possessions: Chain shirt, greatclub, longspear, nonmagical iron amulet, *wand of identify* (17 charges), stone knife, large sack containing 220 gp, gold bracer (worth 70 gp), iron keys to the cages in his cave.

When running Yventhu, keep the following in mind:

☛ Yventhu does not care too much about his minions but feigns concern when informed of the death of any orcs, ogrillons, and ogres in his territory. At first, he demands compensation for every such creature killed by the PCs in the Brown Grounds. Yventhu says that he is not going to help the heroes at all if they do not pay a suitable amount (1 gp per creature slain). If the PCs laugh at the proposal, Yventhu gets angry but quickly composes himself and drops the matter.

☛ If the PCs tell him about Iriandel's story, Yventhu promptly says that Turiew's spear was not buried with Tamaich but hidden in the Poven Hills, in a place known only to him. He offers to deliver the spear for 1,000 gp, half of which must be handed over immediately. The PCs might well laugh at this second proposal, too. Moreover, clever questions about the spear (such as when it was created) can easily reveal Yventhu's ignorance; he does not even know what a unicorn looks like. Again, Yventhu barely controls his rage before a refusal but does not miss the opportunity to acknowledge the PCs' guile.

☛ If the PCs ask about the barrow, Yventhu offers an iron key. The adept says that he took it "from the last custodian of the tomb, killed by elves a long time ago." He sells the key for 100 gp or the equivalent in provisions or magic. The iron key is, in fact, a useless plaything stolen from a slain adventurer. Yventhu growls in disgust if the PCs decline this offer.

☛ As a last resort, especially if the heroes seem ready to attack, Yventhu offers the PCs a guide to the barrow. He commands two ogrillons to bring forth Wuhlap, the half-orc prisoner in Yventhu's cave. Wuhlap has been sentenced to death for discovering the precise location of the tomb in the Knuckles. He tried to persuade a group of orcs to accompany him on a grave-robbing expedition and was reported to Yventhu. Wuhlap has been tortured and is starving but shows his best grin when presented to the PCs. Yventhu's last proposal is the least dishonest, as Wuhlap actually knows how to reach the barrow and can take the PCs there in just one day. Moreover, the half-orc is not evil, and saving him from his horrible fate earns the PCs the half-orc's friendship. The adept sells Wuhlap to the heroes for 50 gp.

Wuhlap, Male Half-orc Rog3: CR 3; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. 3 in. tall); HD 3d6; hp 12 (currently 7); Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +3 melee (1d3+1 subdual, unarmed strike); SA sneak attack +2d6; SD evasion, uncanny dodge; SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 9.

SA–Sneak Attack (Ex): Anytime Wuhlap's target is denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether he actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when Wuhlap flanks a target, his attacks deal an extra 2d6 points of damage. See Chapter 3: Classes in the *PH* for details.

SD–Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Wuhlap takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

SD–Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Wuhlap retains his Dexterity bonus to AC even if caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. (See Chapter 3: Classes in the *PH.*)

Skills: Balance +5, Climb +4, Disable Device +5, Hide +5, Intimidate +2, Listen +5 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Pick Pocket +5, Search +1, Spot +5 (includes Alertness feat), Tumble +5. *Feats:* Alertness, Ambidexterity.

Wuhlap is a teenager who has never known his parents and has been brutally raised by the half-ogre adepts. He hates Yventhu and will do anything to escape him. Wuhlap was near the barrow during one warm summer night, but he has not been frightened too much by the haunting. He remembers only the faint noises of a distant battle coming from nowhere, almost like a dream. Wuhlap eagerly joins the party to rob the barrow.

Viper (1): CR 1; Medium-size Animal (4 ft. long); HD 2d8; hp 6; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d4-1, bite); SA poison; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +12, Listen +9, Spot +9. *Feat:* Weapon Finesse (bite).

SA–Poison (Ex): Any PC bitten by the snake must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 11) or take 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage. One minute later, the PC must make a second saving throw (DC 11) or take another 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage.

SD–Scent (Ex): The snake can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, range drops to 15 feet.

The Knuckles

PCs traveling to Tamaich's tomb on foot or horseback spend the last day of travel passing through a rough, hilly region known as the Knuckles. There the heroes have two encounters with the ghostly presences that haunt the land around the barrow. The encounters can happen in whatever order you wish. The intensity of the haunting around the barrow varies according to the alignment of whoever traverses the area. Evil beings such as orcs and ogres trigger much weaker reactions than good-aligned creatures.

Battle By Firelight

This encounter occurs at night. The heroes hear distant noises and cries coming from all directions, loud enough to disturb sleep. After an hour, the noises fade into an eerie silence. If the PCs have a campfire, it mysteriously grows in intensity. Suddenly, a ghostly red image appears in the middle of the fire. The DM should read or paraphrase the following:

> The fire grows bigger—almost 2 meters tall—and its crackling becomes a roar. The enlarged flame casts long shadows all around the camp, where strange luminescent shapes begin to form. They dash here and there, like restless warriors fighting each other. The roar breaks into a multitude of cries, snarls, and howls. You hear the neighing of horses, the blare of trumpets, and the frantic roll of drums. The clash of a thousand warriors echoes in the night.

Each PC must make a successful Will saving throw (DC 13) or be affected as by a *cause fear* spell. Creatures with 6 or more Hit Dice are immune. Whoever fails the saving throw runs away from the camp in a random direction, dropping anything in hand. The duration of the fear effect is 1d4 rounds. (Roll randomly for each affected PC or creature.) Tashek, the

wise owl, is immune to this magic. If the bird is with the party, his soothing words grant the heroes a +2 morale bonus to their saving throws.

Any PC fleeing the camp has a 1-in-6 chance per round of being attacked by one of four dire bats that hunt in this region, as described under **Creatures** below.

Creatures (EL 6): The dire bats are not discriminating about what they eat. However, they do not attack PCs within 30 feet of a large fire. The bats prefer to attack PCs in the dark. In total darkness, the dire bats benefit from nine-tenths concealment (40% miss chance on all attacks). The bats, who rely on their blindsight to hunt prey, are not hindered by the dark unless they are deafened (by a *silence* spell, for instance).

Dire Bats (4): CR 2; Large Animal (15-ft. wingspan); HD 4d8+12; hp 30 each; Init +6 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 20 (-1 size, +6 Dex, +5 natural); Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, bite); Face 10 ft. × 5 ft.; SQ blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 22, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Spot +12. (Dire bats receive a +4 racial bonus to Spot and Listen checks, but these bonuses are lost if its blindsight is negated.)

SQ–Blindsight (Ex): A dire bat can locate objects and creatures within 120 feet. A *silence* spell negates this and forces the bat to rely on its weak vision, which has a maximum range of 10 feet.

Phantoms of the Iorai

This encounter occurs in the early morning or near sunset. The PCs pass close to a small pond sunken among the moors. As one PC (chosen at random) passes by the pond and glances into the water, read or paraphrase the following:

> In the still water of the pond you see the reflection of many mounted warriors. Their shields bear the coat-of-arms of a blue horse running over a cloud. The warriors stand immobile and look at you with lifeless eyes. Darkness falls upon the warriors as they raise their right arms. You see that every right hand has been chopped off.

This vision lasts for just a few seconds. The phantoms are not dangerous and actually give the PCs a clue about one of the perils inside the barrow; see area 8 below.

Tamaich's Barrow

The following description assumes that the PCs arrive at Tamaich's barrow toward the end of a cold and misty morning. Modify the boxed text accordingly if the PCs arrive at some other time:

> The dark bulk of a hillock emerges slowly from the mist, revealing a mound as large as any of the surrounding hillocks. Weeds and heather grow upon its slopes, dotted here and there by shrubs and brambles. A circle of standing stones marks the perimeter of what must be the tomb of the half-orc barbarian-king, Tamaich.

The barrow is 70 feet tall and has a diameter of more than 100 yards. Sixty standing stones circle its base. Some of them have toppled, while others have sunken into the soft ground. One has been charred and cracked by lightning. Any PC who inspects the stones notices that they are thick slabs of solid granite. The stones were dragged from a distant quarry (see "Yventhu's Lair" above) with ropes.

If the PCs inspect the perimeter of the barrow carefully, they find the upper corner of a massive stone lintel almost completely hidden by dirt and vegetation on the west side. The PCs must dig their way down to free the stone door beneath. This requires 30 man-hours of excavation. If the PCs brought shovels or similar implements, the digging time is halved.

Once the PCs have cleared the entrance, they find a stone slab 6 feet wide and 8 feet tall set into a strong, dry-walled structure. See area 1 below.

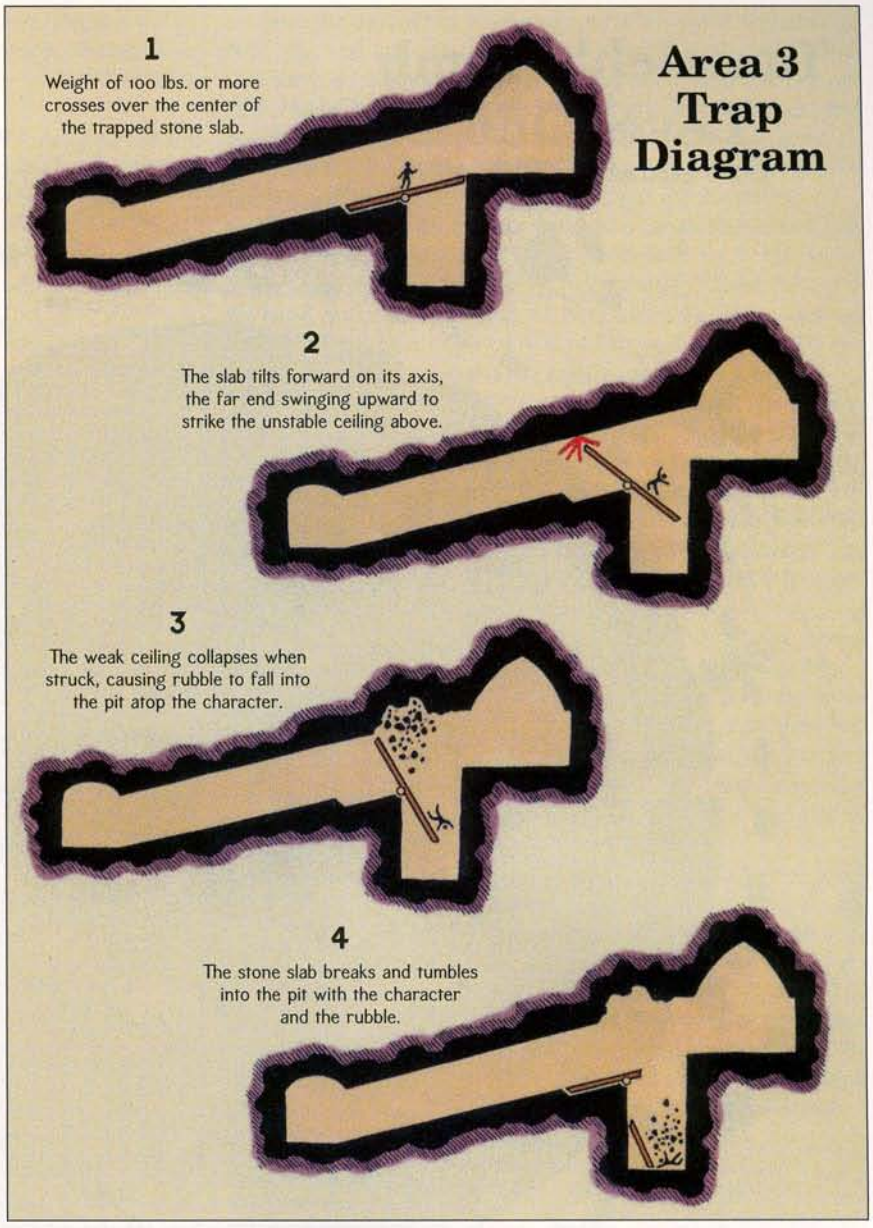
Creatures (EL varies): There is a 1-in-6 chance of a random encounter each hour the PCs spend outside Tamaich's barrow; if an encounter is indicated, roll 1d12 and consult the "Random Encounter" table.

Encounters in the Tomb

Tamaich's tomb consists of two levels. The upper level was built over the camp itself, lining earthen trenches with slabs of rock and burying them under a gigantic mound of peaty soil. The lower level was carved from the rock by the Sya-Negan following the death of their chieftain. The whole complex has been sealed shut for three hundred years.

The ceilings of rooms inside the tomb are mostly cone-shaped. They are built with many converging layers of flat stones. Ceilings in the rooms are 20 feet high. The 8-foot-wide corridors have flat ceilings about 10 feet

high. The walls and floors of the upper level are lined with stone blocks. In the lower level, rooms and corridors are hewn from natural rock.


Area 3 Trap Diagram
1
Weight of 100 lbs. or more crosses over the center of the trapped stone slab.
2
The slab tilts forward on its axis, the far end swinging upward to strike the unstable ceiling above.
3
The weak ceiling collapses when struck, causing rubble to fall into the pit atop the character.
4
The stone slab breaks and tumbles into the pit with the character and the rubble.

Level One

1. Stone Door. The stone door is stuck but not trapped. PCs must either force open the door, cast a *knock* spell on it, or move through it with the aid of a *passwall* or similar spell.

The corridor beyond the door is dark and damp. The smell of rotting plants and wet soil permeates the earthen tunnel. The air inside is musty and stifling, but not harmful.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28.

2. Ditch Corridor. This corridor was once the unfinished inner ditch of the Sya-Negan camp. It circles almost the entire upper level of the tomb. It is otherwise unremarkable.

3. Trapped Ramp. This ramp slopes gently upward to a dead end room. It is rigged with a deadly mechanical **Trap**, detailed below. A diagram of the trap is also provided.

Trap (EL 3): The ramp floor is made of three 20-foot-long slabs of stone. The uppermost slab (marked on the map) conceals a 20-foot-deep pit. The slab has two pivots embedded in the walls that allow it to tilt. When the weight beyond the rotation axis exceeds the weight before it by more than 100 pounds, the slab tilts. The upper part of the slab goes down into the pit and the lower part goes up toward the ceiling. PCs standing on the trap fall into the pit unless they make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 20) to jump to safety. Falling damage is 2d6 points.

The ceiling above the trapped area is unstable. When the trap is activated, the ceiling stones are struck by the raised edge of the floor slab. A section of floor slab and ceiling collapses into the pit, inflicting an additional 3d6 points of damage to anyone in the pit. A successful Reflex saving throw (DC 20) halves the damage; PCs with evasion suffer no damage if the saving throw succeeds.

Any PC who fails the second Reflex saving throw is buried by the falling rocks and must make a successful Strength check (DC 22) to extricate herself. The PC can take 20 on this roll and receive aid from other PCs. (See the Aid Another rule in Chapter 8: Combat in the *PH*.) The stoning is likely to shatter unsecured fragile objects like potion bottles or long wooden shafts; such items suffer 3d6 points of damage.

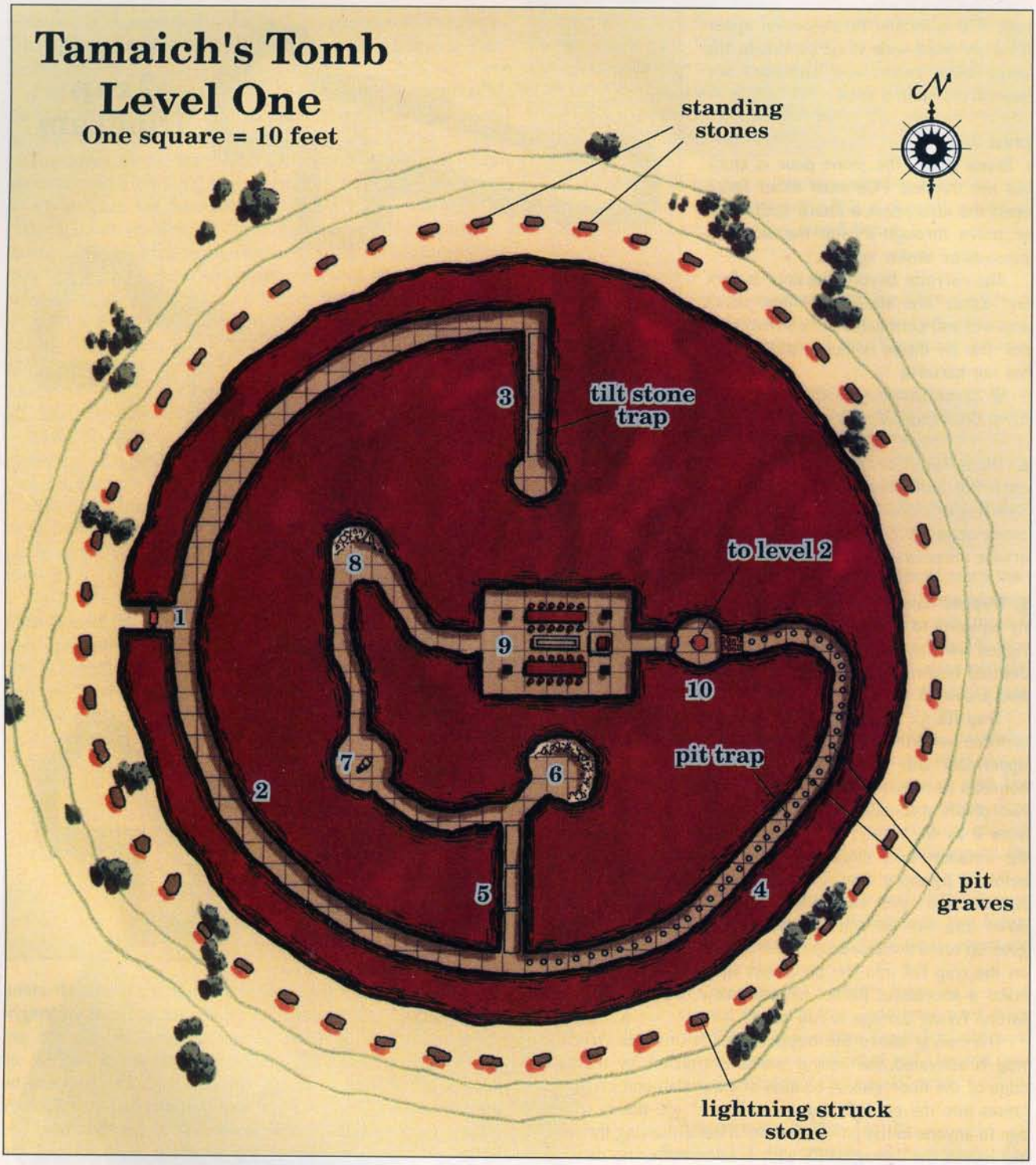
The tilting floor slab breaks in two pieces when it hits the ceiling; one half falls back on the ramp and the other drops into the pit. (See above for damage.)

You should determine how many PCs are on the tilt-stone when the trap is activated. If the party advances in very tight marching order, up to three heroes can fall into the pit. Conversely, a Small PC scouting ahead, like a halfling or gnome, is not likely to trigger the tilt-stone. The trap can be detected by normal or magical means. It can be neutralized by placing enough ballast on the lower half of the tilt-stone. The ballast on the lower half of the tilt-stone must exceed the weight on the upper half by more than 100 pounds.

PCs who jump to safety find themselves in the dead-end room at the top of the ramp. These PCs have no choice other than to come back. A successful Climb skill check (DC 10) or Jump skill check (see skill description) is required to cross the open pit without falling in.

Climbing out of the pit requires a successful Climb skill check (DC 25).

20-foot-deep Pit with Falling Rocks: CR 3; 2d6 (fall) plus 3d6 (falling debris) points of damage; initial Reflex saving throw (DC 20) negates all damage; secondary Reflex save (DC 20)



halves damage from falling rocks; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 25).

4. Corridor of Graves. Forty-one round slabs line the middle of this 8-foot-wide ditch tunnel. Each stone is 2 feet in diameter with a rough, abstract-looking glyph engraved on its surface. The round slabs cover the plain pit-graves of forty-one elite Sya-Negan warriors, and the glyphs are monograms of their family names. Under each stone lies a 3-foot-deep cavity containing the bones of a man-sized humanoid and various rusty weapons and armor pieces. Nothing of value can be found in the pit-graves; however, one of the graves is actually a **Trap**, detailed below.

The corridor comes to a dead end. The passage to area 10 has been walled up with rocks. Removing the rocks requires 48 man-hours of work; PCs can bypass the barrier with a *passwall* or similar spell.

Trap (EL 2): One pit-grave (marked on the map) bears no glyph. A 30-foot-feet deep pit has been dug under it. Applying more than 100 pounds of weight within 3 feet of the marker

causes a 10-foot-square section of floor around the marker to collapse. Falling PCs suffer 3d6 points of damage. The pit walls are smooth and slippery and require a successful Climb skill check (DC 25) to scale.

30-foot-deep Pit: CR 2; 3d6 points of damage; Reflex saving throw (DC 20) negates; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 25).

5. Ramp. This ramp looks exactly like the one in area 3, but it is not trapped.

6. Bones and Stones. This room has been shaped with *wall of stone* spells. When the PCs peer inside, read or paraphrase the following:

> The walls of this oval chamber are made of smooth, seamless rock. Four crudely sculpted frescoes protrude from the walls. They are spaced 10 feet apart in a semicircle along the far wall. Each fresco depicts a 4-foot-tall, vaguely humanoid shape.
>
> The bones of countless beasts lie along the curved eastern edge of the cave floor. You see the skulls of hundreds of wolves, bears, hedgehogs, horses, and boars in 5-foot-tall piles. Something gleams inside one of the hedgehog skulls.

Hidden inside two of the hedgehog skulls is the **Treasure**. Touching either skull triggers a **Trap**, while triggering the trap or touching a fresco releases the **Creatures**. The hedgehog skulls radiate moderate Transmutation magic when a *detect magic* spell is cast. The frescoes radiate strong Transmutation magic.

Trap (EL 2): As soon as someone touches one of the hedgehog skulls, it glows momentarily with amber light. This triggers a *transmute rock to mud* spell on the ceiling of the room, causing it to collapse. PCs in the room must make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 20) to avoid the crushing mass of mud and soil. PCs who fail their Reflex save are caught by the cave-in, take 2d6 points of damage, and are stunned for 1d4 rounds. PCs buried beneath the debris begin to suffocate; such PCs can hold their breath for 2 rounds per point of Constitution, after which time each buried PC must make a Constitution check (DC 10) to continue holding her breath. The saving throw must be repeated each round, with the DC increasing by +1 for each previous success. Once a PC is no longer stunned, she can dig through the fallen earth and mud at a rate of 5 feet per round.

The fallen earth and mud almost reaches the top of the ramp in area 5 but does not block the tunnel to area 7. The earth elementals (see **Creatures** below) are unaffected by the cave-in and can easily pass through the earthen mass to charge PCs.

This magical trap cannot be disabled, although casting a successful *dispel magic* on a skull allows it to be touched and handled without triggering the *transmute rock to mud* spell. The dispel check is 1d20 +1 per caster level (maximum +10) against a DC of 24.

Collapsing Ceiling: CR 2; 2d6 points of damage plus stun and suffocation; Reflex saving throw (DC 20) negates; Search (DC 28); Disable Device (not applicable).

Creatures (EL 4): The sculpted frescoes are, in fact, four small earth elementals half embedded in the walls and held in stasis. Touching one of them or triggering the ceiling trap releases the elementals from stasis, at which point they emerge from the wall and attack. They can pass through rock, stone, and earth as easily as a human walking over land and are not inhibited by the **Trap**. The elementals fight until destroyed and can pass through solid stone and rock to reach their prey.

These earth elementals helped the Sya-Negan construct the barrow and were finally left here to fight off intruders.

Small Earth Elementals (4): CR 1; Small Elemental (4 ft. tall); HD 2d8+2; hp 11 each; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+1 size, -1 Dex, +7 natural); Atk +5 melee (1d6+3, slam); SA earth mastery, push; SQ elemental; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref -1, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5. *Feat:* Power Attack.

SA—Earth Mastery (Ex): An earth elemental gains a +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and its foe touch the ground. If an opponent is airborne or waterborne, the elemental suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage.

SA—Push (Ex): An earth elemental can start a bull rush maneuver without provoking an attack of opportunity. The combat modifiers listed under Earth Mastery above also apply to the elemental's opposed Strength checks.

SQ—Elemental: Elementals are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. They are not subject to critical hits.

Treasure: Stuffed into one hedgehog skull is an ornamental Sya-Negan necklace. The necklace is little more than a leather cord strung with nine human finger bones. However, set into the ends of the finger bones are nine 100-gp gems. The necklace, made from the bones of slain Iorai women, was placed here to lure grave robbers into the **Trap**.

The second hedgehog skull contains a tarnished silver pendant adorned with the Iorai crest (a blue horse jumping over a cloud). Also placed here to lure intruders into the room, the pendant is nonmagical and worth 10 gp.

7. Shadow Sentries. The sole feature in this circular room is a life-size statue of an ogrillon modeled in dull brown ceramic. As soon as light from a torch, lantern, candle, magic weapon, or spell illuminates the statue, read or paraphrase the following:

> Light penetrates a circular chamber ahead and reveals a 7-foot-tall statue of an ogrillon standing in the middle of the floor. The statue is made of smooth, brown ceramic, but its surface gleams unnaturally in the light, enhancing its malevolent features. The shadows in the room look strange and frightening.

The ogrillon statue is the focus of a magical **Trap** activated by light. It radiates moderate Illusion magic when a *detect magic* spell is cast. The statue is also hollow and contains the **Creature**. PCs who move or damage the statue cause the creature within to awaken. Once awakened, the creature liquifies the statue, extricates itself, and attacks, all in the first round.

Trap (EL 2): If the PCs enter the room with one or more light sources, the shadows in the room seem to animate. The statue creates three illusory shadows plus one additional illusory shadow for each light source brought into the room (including dim sources such as glowing weapons or candles).

The illusory shadows can reach any PC in the room but cannot pursue PCs beyond the chamber. They attack like undead shadows, temporarily draining Strength from their victims. After 20 rounds, the illusions vanish, and all drained

Strength points are restored instantly. Any PC reduced to 0 Strength in the interim falls helpless on the ground. The illusory shadows are immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage. These illusions can be harmed only by +1 or better magic weapons, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. They ignore armor when attacking and always move silently.

A successful *dispel magic* cast upon the room or the statue causes the illusory shadows to vanish. The dispel check is 1d20 +1 per caster level (maximum +10) against DC 23.

Illusory Shadows (3 or more): CR –; Medium-size Illusion [Shadow]; HD 3d12; hp 20 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk +1 melee (1d6 points of temporary Strength); SQ illusion, incorporeal; AL nil; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will –; Str –, Dex 14, Con –, Int –, Wis –, Cha –.

Creature (EL 5): The ceramic statue contains a gibbering mouther in hibernation. If the statue is disturbed, the mouther awakens. It liquifies the statue's ceramic shell, causing it to melt away. In the same round, the mouther gibbers, spits, and bites.

Gibbering Mouther (1): CR 5; Medium-size Aberration (4 ft. diameter); HD 4d8+4; hp 19; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 10 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 19 (+1 Dex, +8 natural); Atk +4 melee (1 [×6], bites); SA gibbering, spittle, improved grab, blood drain, engulf, ground manipulation; SQ amorphous; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills: Listen +8, Spot +12. *Feats:* Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (bites).

SA–Gibbering (Su): Once freed, the mouther begins gibbering as a free action. All creatures within 60 feet must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 13) or be affected as though by a *confusion* spell for 1d2 rounds. This sonic compulsion effect follows the rules for a spread (as described in "Aiming a Spell" in Chapter 10: Magic in the *PH*).

SA–Spittle (Ex): In the first round of combat, and every 2 rounds thereafter, the mouther looses a stream of spittle. This ignites on contact with the air, creating a blinding flash of light. All sighted creatures within 60 feet must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 13) or be blinded for 1d3 rounds.

SA–Improved Grab (Ex): The gibbering mouther must hit with a bite attack to grab its prey.

SA–Blood Drain (Ex): On a second successful grapple check after grabbing, that mouth attaches to the opponent. It automatically deals bite damage and drains blood, dealing 1 point of temporary Constitution damage each round. A mouth can be ripped off (dealing 1 point of damage) with a successful Strength check (DC 12) or severed by a normal attack that deals at least 2 points of damage (AC 18). A severed mouth continues to bite and drain blood for 1d4 rounds after such an attack. A creature whose Constitution is reduced to 0 is absorbed by the mouther, which gains 1 hit point and adds another mouth and pair of eyes to its body.

SA–Engulf (Ex): The mouther can try to engulf a Medium-size or smaller opponent grabbed by three or more mouths. The opponent must succeed at a Reflex saving throw (DC 14) or fall and be engulfed. On the next round, the mouther makes 12 bite attacks (each with a +4 attack bonus). An engulfed creature cannot attack the mouther from within. The previously attached mouths are now free to attack others.

SA–Ground Manipulation (Su): At will, the mouther can cause stone and earth within 5 feet of it to become a morass akin to quicksand as a standard action. Softening earth, sand, or the like takes 1 round, while stone takes 2 rounds. Anyone other than the mouther in that area must take a move equivalent action to avoid becoming mired (treat as being pinned).

SQ–Amorphous (Ex): The mouther is not subject to critical hits. It has no clear front or back, so it cannot be flanked.

8. Chamber of Trophies. Many weapons and items once belonging to the Iorai are stored in this room. Read or paraphrase the following:

> Swords, axes, helmets, and shields lay about the perimeter of the room. All items look badly damaged by moisture and time. A dozen lances lean in good order against the circling wall. The ragged remains of a blue standard and a rusty steel gauntlet hang from the rotting shaft of each lance.

Each gauntlet contains the mummified hand of an Iorai standard-bearer. The hands were cut from the bodies and animated by Tamaich's adepts. If a PC recalls the vision in the pond (see "Phantoms of the Iorai") and warns his or her companions, the animated hands cannot surprise the party.

Hidden behind a rusted shield bearing the familiar symbol of the Iorai (a blue horse leaping over a cloud) is the **Treasure**.

Creatures (EL 2): The crawling hands are treated as Tiny zombies and attack as soon as someone approaches one of the rusty gauntlets. The hands crawl out of their gauntlets and either jump at the PCs or crawl down the wall like horrible spiders. If the PCs flee the room, the severed hands pursue them, but not outside the barrow or into area **9**.

These crawling hands move more quickly than ordinary zombies and can take a standard action each round.

Crawling Hands [Zombies] (12): CR 1/6; Tiny Undead (8 in. long); HD 1/2d12+3 (includes Toughness feat); hp 6 each; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 11 (+2 size, -1 Dex); Atk +1 melee (1d3-1, rake); Face 2 1/2 ft. × 2 1/2 ft. ; Reach 0 ft.; SA strangle; SQ undead; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +2; Str 9, Dex 8, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 3.

Feat: Toughness.

SA–Strangle (Ex): If a crawling hand manages to grapple its victim (see **Tactics** below), it clutches its victim by the throat and automatically deals 1d3 points of damage each round until turned or destroyed, or until the victim breaks the grapple.

SQ–Undead: The hands are immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Tactics: A crawling hand tries to grapple the nearest PC, allowing the PC an attack of opportunity. If the attack of opportunity deals damage, the grapple fails. If the attack of opportunity misses or does not occur (because the PC is carrying a ranged weapon), the hand tries to grab the PC; this requires a successful touch attack. The PC's armor is not counted toward her AC for purposes of this attack. If the hand grabs its prey, it tries to grapple the PC. The crawling hand and the PC must make opposed grapple checks. The hand is treated as Medium-size for purposes of the grapple. If it succeeds in grappling the PC, it deals 1d3 points of damage. It then begins strangling the character (as detailed above).

Treasure: Partially hidden under a shield in the western part of the chamber is a rotten wooden casket. Inside are eight silver torcs worth 20 gp each and two *potions of darkvision*. Laying on the floor behind the casket, looking in much better shape than the other weapons in the room, is a *+1 javelin*.

9. Hall of the Chieftain.

You have reached what might once have been the heart of the Sya-Negan camp—the hall where Tamaich and his barbarians feasted three centuries ago. This great room was once a large wooden building. Much of the wood has rotted away, and pillars of stone carved with skeletal imagery support the layered tiles that cover the ceiling. A rocky throne stands atop a pedestal at the far end of the room. Two long stone tables run along the entire room, surrounded by granite stools. Metal bottles and knives rest atop the stone tables among broken pottery. A rectangular fire pit occupies the space between the two tables.

A dozen clay statues depicting Sya-Negan warriors sit on the stools in various positions. A rusty longsword rests beside each stool. The statues are headless, but someone has placed real orc skulls on their clay shoulders. A dim red light flickers inside the eye sockets of each skull.

Twelve stools and six statues are positioned around each table. The twelve clay statues are inanimate and break easily (Hardness 2, hp 5). A pit-grave similar to those in area **4** is dug under each occupied stool. The cavity below contains the old bones of a Sya-Negan captain. Only the captains' skulls and longswords have been left out.

The red flicker in the skulls' eye sockets is normal light reflected by small glass beads set inside the skulls. The skulls are part of the room's elaborate **Trap**.

The throne is carved from granite but has been chiselled with a woodlike texture. Sliding the throne to one side requires a successful Strength check (DC 23) and reveals a secret compartment in the dais that contains the room's **Treasure**.

Trap (EL 5): The beads embedded in the eye sockets of each skull radiate Abjuration magic when a *detect magic* spell is cast. The beads project invisible rays that can be seen only with *see invisibility* or similar spells. The rays form a web or lattice that fills a 10-foot-high section of the room starting 3 feet above the floor. (Thus, PCs can crawl along the floor or *spider climb* across the ceiling without passing through the invisible detection web.)

Anyone crossing the room without paying heed to the rays is certain to pass through the lattice. When this happens, all twelve longswords in the room float in the air and attack all living creatures in the room (similar to the *animate object* spell). Any blades carried by PCs in the area of effect are also animated by the spell. (Only swords are affected.) The animated blades do not travel beyond the confines of the room.

Any PC with a sword in hand must make a successful Strength check (DC 12) each round to hold on to the weapon. However, the PC can try to break the blade by smashing it against something hard (like a nearby pillar). A PC trying to attack with an animated blade suffers a -4 penalty to all attack rolls. If the Strength check fails or the PC willingly releases the weapon to perform another action, the blade leaps into the air and begins attacking the nearest living creature.

The swords remain animate for 4 minutes. When the spell expires, the blades drop to the floor and the glass beads in the skulls shatter, destroying the trap. The trap can be disabled only by a *dispel magic* spell cast upon the entire room. The dispel check is 1d20 +1 per caster level against DC 23.

Dancing Blades: The following table provides the hardness ratings and hit points for blades of various sizes:

Blade Size	Hardness	HP
Tiny (dagger)	10	1
Small (short sword)	10	2
Medium-size (longsword)	10	5
Large (greatsword)	10	10

Treasure: Hidden in a secret compartment beneath Tamaich's throne are six glazed clay bottles sealed with wax and covered with Orc runes that correctly identify each bottle's contents: a *potion of bull's strength*, a *potion of lesser restoration*, a *potion of neutralize poison*, and a *potion of spider climb*.

10. Way Down. The stone door leading to this room is similar to the one in area 1. The door is stuck and must be forced open.

The room is bare except for a circular stone plug in the middle of the floor. The stone plug is 6 feet in diameter, and its upper surface is carved into the shape of a female orc's leering face.

The eastern passage has been walled up with dry stones; see area **4** for details.

The stone plug, which has a *magic mouth* spell cast on it, radiates faint Illusion magic when scrutinized by a *detect magic* spell. (The spell doesn't trigger until the lid is removed; see below.) Lifting or sliding away the lid requires a successful Strength check (DC 24). PCs can take 20 and use the "Aid Another" rule described in Chapter 8: Combat in the *PH*. Up to six PCs can attempt to slide or lift the plug at once. The lid covers a 5-foot-wide vertical shaft.

Once the PCs remove the lid and look down, read or paraphrase the following:

A stone shaft plunges into darkness. As you peer down, the horrible voice of a woman issues from the face carved into the stone plug. It utters just one word: "Tamaich!" A moment later a chilling moan from below answers the call, echoing up the shaft.

One round after the moan, a magical *gust of wind* rises from the shaft, automatically extinguishing torches and candles. The gust is accompanied by four spectral phantoms that emerge from the darkness below. These phantoms manifest as the transparent, animated skeletons of slain Sya-Negan barbarians. Although harmless, they look particularly frightening. Each PC must make a successful Will saving throw (DC 11) or be affected by a *cause fear* spell. Creatures with 6 or more Hit Dice are immune. Whoever fails the saving throw drops any item in hand and flees for 1d4 rounds. PCs who flee through area **9** might trigger the trap there (if it's still active). The phantoms of the dead Sya-Negan barbarians persist for 4 rounds, then vanish. They cannot be dispelled or turned, as they are neither magical nor undead.

Note that the *magic mouth* on the stone plug is not permanent and can be triggered once only. Likewise, the Sya-Negan phantoms manifest only once.

Level Two

11. Way Up. The shaft from area 10 opens over a conical chamber 30 feet high and 20 feet wide at the base. The walls slope inward and are thus difficult to climb; PCs trying to find purchase on the ceiling without the aid of a *spider climb* or similar spell must make a successful Climb skill check (DC 25) or fall. There is no stairway or any other means to facilitate the descent. The room is empty.

12. Nexus.

A thin and unnatural mist fills the 30-foot-wide chamber ahead. Through the misty veil you can see a large granite pillar sculpted to resemble four entwined skeletal serpents, each one facing one of four passages leading away from the chamber. The pillar supports a 20-foot-high tiled ceiling.

Carved into the southwest wall is a 9-foot-tall bas-relief representing a powerful-looking warrior in a solemn and rigid pose. The warrior's features look orcish.

The 9-foot-tall bas-relief in the southwest corner of this room represents Tamaich. This effigy marks the focus of the haunting inside and outside the barrow. The bas-relief is not magical, however, and its defacing or destruction has no effect whatsoever. When the PCs come within 10 feet of the bas-relief, they encounter a phantom of Tamaich:

You hear the measured impact of two heavy boots on the rocky floor and the clinking of metal armor. The imposing figure of an ancient warlord steps out from the darkness of the western passage, surrounded in the dim light of a spectral halo. The figure wears furs, a breastplate, and an open-faced helmet shaped like a dragon's claw clenching the wearer's head. You cannot make out any of his features besides the chilling gleam of two ghostly eyes. The warlord stops and raises both hands menacingly. He whispers mysterious words and makes spellcasting gestures.

The phantom warlord was created using a *programmed image* spell and lasts 12 rounds. Although it appears threatening, it cannot harm the PCs and vanishes if struck or touched.

The illusion of Tamaich was intended to alert the denizens of area 14 and make the PCs deplete their most powerful magical attacks. Once the illusion is dispelled, the wights in area 14 rush to this chamber to attack the PCs.

13. Unfinished Tunnel. The excavation here was abandoned after a small cave-in. The end of this corridor is roughly hewn and littered with debris.

14. Crypt of the Consorts. Three stone beds lay in a row atop a stone bier in the northern section of this 20-foot-high chamber. Lying atop the slab are some mangy furs and shredded bits of clothing. Searching the furs reveals **Treasure** #1. PCs searching the rest of the room find **Treasure** #2.

Tamaich's three wives were buried alive and forced to share the fate of their dead husband. When Tamaich's spirit was denied peace in the afterlife, it returned as a wraith. The first thing he did was turn his screaming wives into wights under his command.

Creatures (EL 6): The undead consorts are under the control of the wraith in area 16. They only vaguely resemble their mortal selves. The consorts confront intruders in area 12, screaming madly as they rend the PCs with their wicked claws. They desire to be released from unlife and fight until destroyed. If turned, the wights retreat to area 16.

Wights (3): CR 3; Medium-size Undead; HD 4d12; hp 25 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural); Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 and energy drain, slam); SA energy drain, create spawn; SQ undead; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con –, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +16, Search +7, Spot +8. *Feat:* Blind-Fight.

SA–Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a wight suffer 1 negative level. A successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 14) is needed to remove the negative level.

SA–Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a wight becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

SQ–Undead: The wights are immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Treasure #1: PCs searching the beds of Tamaich's consorts find twelve pieces of jewelry, worth a total of 1,200 gp.

Treasure #2: Many mundane items rest along the western wall: foodstuffs, clothing, furs, tools, and pottery. All perishable things are rotten and useless, but some items are still valuable: a silver comb (worth 15 gp), a matching silver mirror (worth 25 gp), and palm box made of mother-of-pearl (worth 150 gp). In the southeast corner stands a silver bowl for mixing wine and water. The carvings of many beasts adorn its outer surface. The bowl is worth 500 gp and weighs 50 lbs.

15. Treasure Vault. Access from area 12 is blocked by a stone door similar to the one in area 1. The door is rigged with a **Trap**.

This room contains a heap of mundane items that once belonged to Tamaich. Among many spoiled things, the PCs can find **Treasure** #1. An alcove on the east wall contains a mildew-encrusted wooden chest. The iron hinges of the chest are blocked by rust, and the PCs must tear away the lid to open it. Inside is **Treasure** #2.

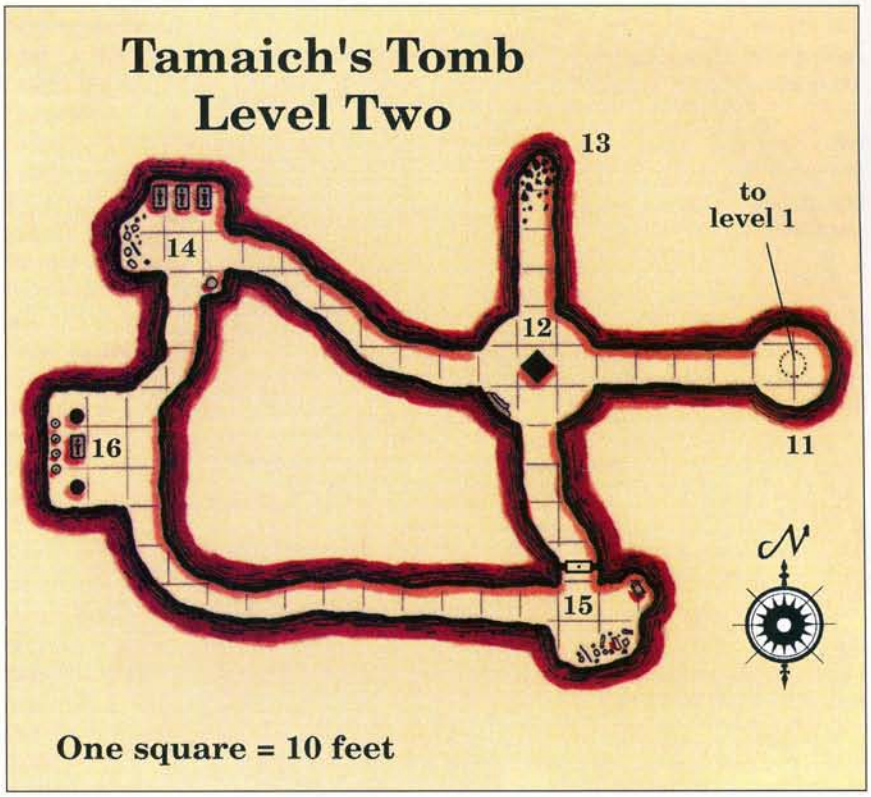
Trap (EL 3): A glass bottle containing poisonous liquid hangs on the south side of the door, suspended by thin metal bars. If the door is forced open or destroyed, the frail bottle falls to the ground and breaks, releasing horrible fumes that immediately fill the entire room and the corridor to area 12. All living creatures in the area of effect must make an initial Fortitude saving throw (DC 18) or take 1 point of permanent Constitution damage; a second saving throw (same DC) is required 1 minute later, with failure indicating an additional 3d6 points of temporary Constitution damage.

Poison Gas Bottle: CR 3; Fortitude saving throw negates (Inhaled DC 18; initial 1 permanent Con; secondary 3d6 temporary Con); Search (DC 24); Disable Device (DC 25 outside area 15, DC 10 inside area 15).

Treasure #1: PCs searching the contents of the room find several items of value: two golden stirrups from a rotten leather saddle (worth 25 gp each), a set of gold studs from a ruined small shield (total value 40 gp), a cup made with a rare conch rimmed with silver and gold (worth 120 gp), an engraved gold medallion with six small sapphires (worth 700 gp), a large emerald set into a rusty iron scepter (1,000 gp for the gem), and a golden dagger sheath encrusted with semi-precious stones (worth 270 gp).

If the PCs approach the south wall with a light source, they glimpse a silvery reflection cast by some shiny object. There, partially wrapped in crumbling cloth, lies the object of the PCs' quest: the spear once used by Lord Turiew to slay Tamaich. Refer to the "Turiew's Spear" sidebar for a description of this powerful weapon.

Since the Sya-Negan menaced a lot of different lands in their time, this treasure room could well contain some other important item from your own campaign. Feel free to add other items to the treasure hoard as you see fit.



Treasure #2: Inside the wooden chest are the following items: a brown ceramic dish painted with highly stylized running ogres with stag antlers, an obsidian spearhead (worth 10 gp), a small ragged sack with 165 gp inside, a saddlebag containing 380 sp, a darkwood shield (a large, lightweight shield that imposes no armor check penalty; worth 257 gp) adorned with an ogre skull motif, a *+1 light mace of throwing* with the head shaped like a dragon fist, and a flask containing *potion of protection from elements (fire).* The chest also contains four ceramic tablets inscribed with odd characters (understandable only with *read magic*). Each tablet is an arcane scroll bearing a single spell: *mage armor, summon monster II, dispel magic,* and *dimension door.*

16. Tamaich's Crypt.

The skeletal remains of a once great warrior lay atop a sculpted stone slab between two large pillars near the middle of this 20-foot-high chamber. A longsword sheathed in a rusty scabbard lies at the foot of the slab. Four rusty iron braziers stand along the west wall.

This tomb houses the mortal remains of Tamaich. The bones are shiny and well-preserved. The breastplate on the corpse is marked by a large crack over the sternum.

This tomb is inhabited by the restless spirit of Tamaich, described under **Creature** below. The breastplate worn by the skeleton and the longsword at the foot of the bier are detailed under **Treasure**. Touching the sword triggers the **Trap.**

Creature (EL 5): A wraith—the undead spirit of Tamaich himself—lurks in the darkness of this crypt. Any of his consorts who were successfully turned can also be found here.

Tamaich attacks anyone who dares violate his resting place, pursuing PCs anywhere inside the barrow. Being immaterial allows the wraith to pass through doors and walls. If his undead wives are present, he uses them as a distraction while he maneuvers to flank prey.

A *speak with dead* spell cast on Tamaich's spirit enrages it (as per the rage effect of the *emotion* spell). It gains a +1 morale bonus on Will saving throws and a -1 penalty to AC for the remainder of the encounter. While enraged, it is compelled to fight heedless of danger, and its turn resistance bonus increases to +3.

Wraith (1): CR 5; Medium-size Undead (Incorporeal); HD 5d12; hp 32; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 deflection); Atk +5 melee (1d4 plus Constitution drain, incorporeal touch); SA Constitution drain, create spawn; SQ undead, incorporeal, turn resistance +2, unnatural aura, daylight powerlessness; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills: Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +12, Search +10, Spot +12. *Feats:* Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

SA—Constitution Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by the wraith attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14) or suffer 1d6 points of permanent Constitution drain.

SA—Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by the wraith becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the wraith that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

SA—Unnatural Aura (Su): Both wild and domesticated animals can sense the unnatural presence of a wraith at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

SQ–Undead: The wraith is immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. It is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

SQ–Incorporeal: The wraith can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. It can pass through solid objects at will, and its own attacks pass through armor. It always moves silently.

SQ–Turn Resistance (Ex): Treat the wraith as though it had 7 Hit Dice for purposes of turning, rebuking, commanding, or bolstering.

SQ–Daylight Powerlessness (Ex): Wraiths are powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell) and flee from it.

Trap (EL 2): Adepts loyal to Tamaich boiled his body in water to strip the flesh from the skeleton, and his bones were polished, assembled, and enchanted as a bone golem. However, the complex ritual to animate the creature was not performed correctly. As soon as the PCs touch the sword, the construct rises from the stone slab as if to attack, shudders momentarily, and explodes, sending bone and metal shrapnel throughout the room. All corporeal creatures in the room (including the wights from area **14**, if present) take 2d8 points of damage or half if their Reflex saving throw (DC 15) is successful. Creatures with evasion (PC rogues, for instance) suffer no damage if the Reflex saving throw succeeds.

Casting a successful *dispel magic* on the skeleton permanently defeats the trap, rendering it inanimate. The dispel check is 1d20 +1 per caster level against DC 23.

Exploding Skeleton: CR 2; 2d8 points of damage; Reflex saving throw (DC 15) halves damage. This trap cannot be detected and disabled.

Treasure: The only treasure is Tamaich's *+2 longsword*, a mean-looking black steel blade. The warlord's breastplate, once the source of many of his powers, was disenchanted when it was pierced by Turiew's magic spear; see the "Turiew's Spear" sidebar for details.

Escaping the Tomb

Once the heroes have recovered Turiew's spear, they have acquired the necessary item to restore Iriandel and conclude the adventure successfully. Since the PCs can reach area **15** without traversing area **16**, PCs might escape from the tomb with the most important prize without actually fighting the most dangerous foe. If the heroes try to escape as soon as they have recovered the spear, any remaining wights attack them in area **11**. The wights do not pursue PCs beyond the lower level. If the PCs enter Tamaich's crypt and provoke the wraith, however, it follows them anywhere in the barrow.

If the PCs destroy the wraith, the hauntings inside and in the vicinity of the barrow end forever.

Back To Pebbleton

As the PCs make their way back to Pebbleton, don't forget to check for random encounters in the Brown Grounds. Make sure to balance the following encounter by taking into account any losses suffered by the party during the adventure. If the PCs are weakened, consider reducing the strength or number of the antagonists (replacing ogrillons with orcs, removing one or both of the half-ogre adepts, and so forth).

When the PCs return, they find Pebbleton besieged by a small army of humanoids and ogres from the Poven Hills. Read or paraphrase the following at this time:

> A low fog has silently crept over the land, casting an eerie gray shroud that hangs about 4 feet above the grass and mud. As you near Pebbleton, you see that all is not well. The fortified walls are lined with archers firing arrows. You follow the flurry of arrows until they vanish into the mist, whereupon you see several groups of creatures–orcs, ogrillons, and ogres. You can't tell how many groups or how many attackers, but it appears Pebbleton is surrounded.
>
> The northernmost group of attackers has moved back out of arrow range. Several of them are watching as a 14-foot-tall ogre with staglike antlers hunches down to pull something heavy out of the ground. You can hear deep grunts and low, grumbling voices.

Pebbleton has been encircled by orcs, ogrillons, and ogres. Leading this small army are the half-ogres Yventhu and Fadyhuk (if they are still alive) as well as a giant ogre named Mulgwar.

The orcs, ogrillons, and ogres are divided into six groups. These warbands have encircled the village, taking cover behind trees, low hillocks, and crude barricades. The palisade around Pebbleton has been hit by a half dozen boulders thrown by the giant ogre, but the wall has not been knocked down at any point. The Pebbleton garrison has so far managed to hold the wooden bastions, occasionally exchanging arrow fire with the nearest enemies.

All is not as bleak as it seems. The fog provides ample concealment for PCs who wish to sneak past or ambush the creatures surrounding Pebbleton, and the warbands are far enough apart that they can't reach each other quickly. The fog provides one-half concealment (20% miss chance on all attacks). Small-sized creatures or larger creatures that crawl beneath the shroud of fog are totally concealed (50% miss chance on all attacks). The fog also grants PCs a +4 circumstance bonus to their Hide skill checks.

Mulgwar and Company

Due north of Pebbleton, the PCs spot the main group of attackers: Mulgwar the giant ogre, the half-ogres Yventhu and Fadyhuk (if alive), four ogrillons, and five orcs. (See **Creatures** below for statistics.) Just out of range of the garrison's shortbows, Mulgwar is trying to pull an immense boulder from the ground. The ogrillons, eager to see the giant knock a hole in the palisade, are digging around the rock to help the giant ogre while the orcs look southward toward Pebbleton. If present, Yventhu and Fadyhuk are shouting orders and overseeing the diggers. This group is isolated from the other groups encircling Pebbleton, and they are not expecting trouble from the north. To rescue Pebbleton, the PCs must defeat the enemy leaders (Yventhu, Fadyhuk, and Mulgwar). If the PCs attack the enemy, the archers guarding Pebbleton's north wall spot the fracas and immediately sound their horns. The archers manning the walls begin shooting all the arrows they can to keep the other enemy warbands occupied while the PCs face Yventhu, Fadyhuk, and Mulgwar's group.

If Wuhlap the half-orc is still with the PCs, he savors any opportunity to get revenge against Yventhu and the ogrillons for his imprisonment. Use Wuhlap to help turn the battle in the PCs' favor if things are going poorly.

Once combat is joined, the PCs have 10 rounds before the other warbands realize that something is amiss. On the 11th round and every 3 rounds thereafter (rounds 14, 17, 20, and 23), another warband arrives to help. Each warband is comprised of one ogre, three ogrillons, and five orcs (an EL 5 encounter).

If things seem to be going poorly for the PCs, they receive help from the Pebbleton garrison; see "Help Is On the Way!" below. If, despite the help of the militia, the PCs are in danger of being defeated, the timely arrival of Quelnef and his wild elves (see "Deleflin's Folk") might be enough to frighten off the evil marauders. The elves should be included only as a last resort, if all seems lost.

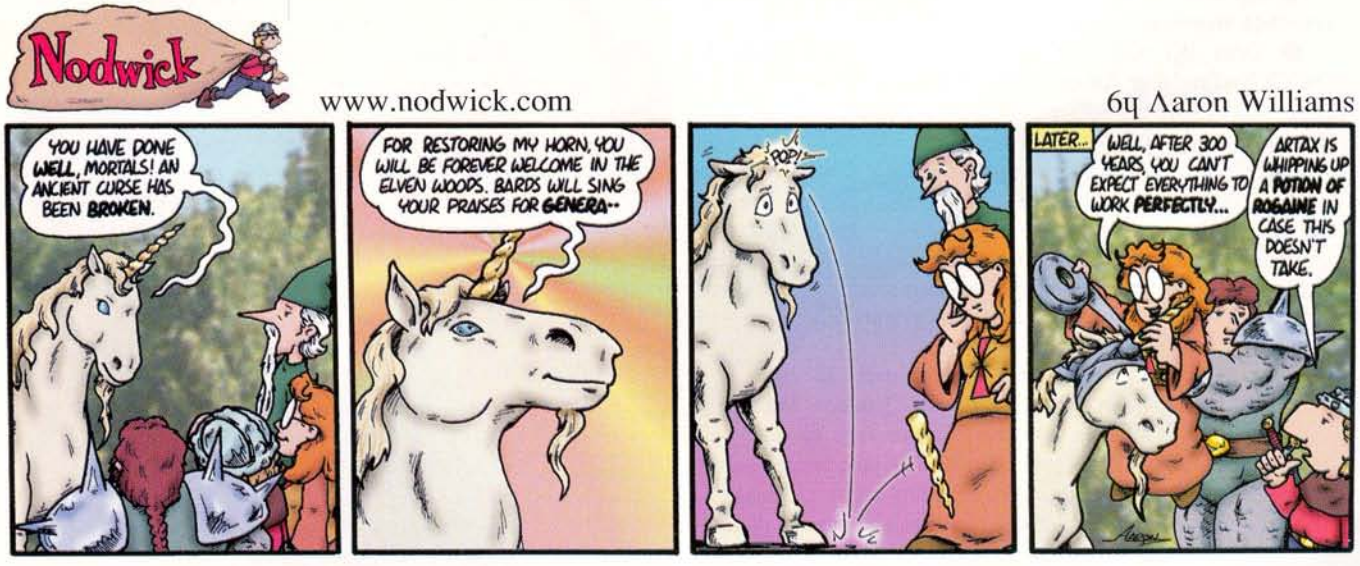
At your discretion, the battle can be carefully balanced to include all the participants and played out with miniatures.

If Mulgwar is slain or incapacitated, Yventhu, Fadyhuk, and any remaining orcs and ogrillons flee at once.

Creatures (EL 7, 9 if Yventhu is present, 10 if both Yventhu and Fadyhuk are present): The giant ogre looks like an overgrown member of his race. He wears crude leather pants and a furry hood topped by the enormous antlers of a prehistoric stag. Mulgwar has taken several wounds from Pebbleton arrows. He has a particular dislike for archers and tries to crush any he sees with hurled rocks.

Mulgwar the Giant Ogre: CR 5; Large Giant (14 ft. tall); HD 8d8+48; hp 80 (55 currently); Init -1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +7 natural, +3 hide armor); Atk +12/+7 melee (2d6+6/2d6+6, huge greatclub) or +5 ranged (2d6+6, huge rock); Reach 10 ft.; SA rock throwing; SQ rock catching; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 23, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 17.

Skills: Climb +8, Jump +8, Spot +4. *Feats:* Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub).


Nodwick
www.nodwick.com
by Aaron Williams
YOU HAVE DONE WELL, MORTALS! AN ANCIENT CURSE HAS BEEN BROKEN.
FOR RESTORING MY HORN, YOU WILL BE FOREVER WELCOME IN THE ELVEN WOODS. BARDS WILL SING YOUR PRAISES FOR GENERA--
POP!
LATER...
WELL, AFTER 300 YEARS, YOU CAN'T EXPECT EVERYTHING TO WORK PERFECTLY...
ARTAX IS WHIPPING UP A POTION OF ROGAINE IN CASE THIS DOESN'T TAKE.

Turiew's Spear

Turiew's spear is the horn of a unicorn transformed into a weapon by divine magic. It is a unique item and is considered a major artifact. Its magic nature is evident at a mere glance, and its powers are instantly known to any chaotic good creature that holds the weapon.

The weapon is a silver-tipped *+3 shortspear* with a spiraling bone shaft that renders its wielder immune to poison. The 6-foot-long milky white shaft is light as wood but strong as steel. If the wielder of the spear scores a critical hit in combat, the weapon disenchants any magical armor worn by the target (no saving throw). If thrown or used in a charge, it deals an additional 3d6 points of damage. The spear contains Iriandel's spirit; it has an Intelligence of 10, a Wisdom of 21, a Charisma of 24, and it is chaotic good. When within 100 yards of Treetrot, the spear vibrates in the wielder's hands. The vibration becomes stronger as the weapon nears the horse. The spear and the horse share the same life force; if the weapon is destroyed (see below), Treetrot dies immediately. If Treetrot dies first, the spear disintegrates.

In the hands of an evil creature, the spear is cursed (although a *remove curse* spell is not needed to rid one of the weapon). Any damage that the spear would deal to the target is instead dealt to its evil wielder.

PCs might be tempted to keep such a fine weapon for themselves. Doing so could be construed as an evil act, as the only purpose of the "horn" is to rejoin its "body."

The spear is extremely resilient, possessing a Hardness of 30 and 15 hit points. It is immune to acid, fire, lightning, cold, corrosion, decay, and sonic attacks. It can be destroyed by a *disintegrate* spell only if it fails a Fortitude saving throw (suffering no damage if the save is successful), and it receives a +9 inherent bonus to the roll.

Hurling Turiew's spear into a *sphere of annihilation* obliterates it instantly (no save allowed).

SA–Rock Throwing (Ex): Mulgwar receives a +1 racial bonus to attack rolls when throwing rocks and can hurl rocks (Small objects) up to 5 range increments.

SQ–Rock Catching (Ex): Mulgwar can catch Small, Medium-size, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, he can make a Reflex saving throw to catch a hurled rock as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for Medium-size, and 25 for Large. (If the projectile has a magical bonus to attack, the DC increases by that amount.) The giant must be ready for and aware of the attack.

Possessions: Hide armor, huge greatclub, huge sack containing 2,000 gp and several mundane items (bowl, spoon, comb, knucklebones, and a bag of salt).

Yventhu, Male Half-ogre Adp4: CR 6; hp 40; see "Yventhu's Lair" for complete statistics. His spell selection has changed from the last time the PCs encountered him:

Spells (3/3/1): 0–*guidance, cure minor wounds,* **resistance;** 1st–*bane, command, doom;* 2nd–*spiritual weapon.*

Fadyhuk, Male Half-ogre Adp1: CR 3; hp 23; see the "Random Encounters" sidebar for complete statistics.

Ogrillons (4): CR 1; hp 13 each; see "Yventhu's Lair" for complete statistics.

Orcs (5): CR 1/2; hp 6 each; see the "Random Encounters" sidebar for complete statistics.

Help Is On the Way!

If the PCs seem overwhelmed, Pebbleton's Captain of the Guard, Demini Whistlefoot, leads a group of his bravest halfling and human warriors to aid them–a sergeant (War2; hp 12) and ten soldiers (War1; hp 7 each). Each wears studded leather armor and carries a small wooden shield, short sword, and shortbow with 15 arrows. Demini's statistics are given under **Creature** below.

Once Mulgwar is slain or incapacitated, all remaining attackers flee northward into the Brown Grounds. Pebbleton has won a major victory, and the PCs are free to claim the giant ogre's valuables as their reward. PCs who need healing are taken to Cailee Merriweather, a halfling cleric of Yondalla. In addition to her full complement of spells, she has six *potions of cure light wounds.*

Creature (EL 0): Demini Whistlefoot is the halfling Captain of the Guard and Jimi Jimepro's good friend. He and his soldiers keep the orcs and ogrillons distracted while the PCs take down the giant ogre, Mulgwar.

Demini Whistlefoot, Male Halfling War3: CR –; Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 3d8; hp 16; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +3 studded leather armor) or 17 (same as above, +1 shield); Atk +4 melee (1d6/crit 19-20, short sword) or +5 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ +2 morale bonus on saving throws against fear; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +6, Jump +6, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Swim +4. *Feats:* Dodge, Weapon Focus (short sword).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, small wooden shield, short sword, shortbow with 15 arrows.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs thwart the attack on Pebbleton, they are embraced as heroes by the locals. The PCs earn their enduring gratitude and can avail themselves of the town's services for free. Once the community is safe, you have two options:

- Assume that Treetrot is still in Pebbleton. Thus, Iriandel can be restored immediately. See below for details.
- Assume that Ruallin was sent by Jimi to seek aid. Riding Treetrot, she managed to slip through the bands of evil marauders and flee toward the nearest town. Of course, to restore Iriandel the PCs must find Ruallin and the horse. This should happen after more perils and adventures. This scenario allows the PCs to reap the benefits of Turiew's magic spear for a much longer time.

If the PCs reunite spear and horse, read or paraphrase the following:

> As soon as Turiew's spear touches Treetrot, a blinding flash of silvery light issues from the spear's tip. Suddenly horse and weapon cease to exist, and a majestic unicorn stands in their place: Iriandel has been restored to his former self!

All witnessing NPCs gape at the wondrous transformation and welcome the result with great enthusiasm. Ruallin is especially pleased and asks the PCs to give her a thorough account

Encounter Level Chart

Any encounter involving creatures or traps has an Encounter Level (EL), An EL value gives the DM an idea of how challenging the encounter is. If the encounter involves one creature or trap, the EL is the same as the creature's or trap's Challenge Rating (CR). For encounters with multiple creatures and/or traps, the EL can be much higher.

If the EL is lower than the party level, the encounter is relatively easy. If the EL is equal to the party level, the encounter is moderately challenging. If the EL is higher than the party level, the encounter is tough and potentially deadly to the PCs if they are unwise or unlucky.

Summarized below are the ELs for all of the encounters in this adventure:

Area	Encounter Description	EL
*	Quelnef, Half-elf Drd3/Ftr2	9
	3 Wolves	
	12 Wild Elves	
**	6 Orc Thieves	3
**	6 Orc Hunters	3
**	2 Ogres	4
**	Fadyhuk, Half-ogre Adp1	5
	4 Ogrillons	
**	6 Wolves	4
**	3 Boars	5
*	Yventhu, Half-ogre Adp4	6 or 10
	12 Ogrillons	
	Wuhlap, Half-orc Rog3	
*	Viper	1
*	4 Dire Bats	6
3	Pit with Falling Rocks Trap	3
4	30-foot-deep Pit Trap	2
6	Collapsing Ceiling Trap	2
	4 Small Earth Elementals	4
5	Illusory Shadows Trap	2
	Gibbering Mouther	5
8	12 Crawling Hands	2
9	Dancing Blades Trap	5
14	3 Wights	6
15	Poison Gas Bottle Trap	3
16	Wraith	5
	Exploding Skeleton Trap	2
*	Mulgwar, Giant Ogre	7
	4 Ogrillons	
	5 Orcs	
	with Yventhu	9
	with Yventhu and Fadyhuk	10

* These encounters are not keyed to a specific location.
** These are random encounters.

of their adventure so that she might prepare a song to conclude the tale of Deleflin and Turiew. Iriandel thanks the PCs, offers them his eternal friendship, and uses its spell-like healing abilities to help the PCs if it can. The unicorn then leaves for his ancient home in the elven woods.

If the PCs choose to explore the woods south of Pebbleton, they find that their relations with the wild elves are much less strained. Iriandel has told the elves of the PCs' heroics, and they are more than happy to let the PCs traverse their woods unmolested.

Creature (EL 0): Iriandel's horn is treated as a +3 magic weapon, although its power fades if removed from the unicorn.

Iriandel (Unicorn): CR –; Large Magical Beast (8 ft. long); HD 4d10+20; hp 42; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 60 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +6 natural); Atk +11 melee (1d8+8, horn), +3/+3 melee (1d4+2/1d4+2, hooves); SQ magic circle against evil, spell-like abilities, immunities; AL CG; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 20, Dex 17, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 21, Cha 24.

Skills: Animal Empathy +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +9, Spot +10, Wilderness Lore +6 (+9 within the boundaries of Iriandel's native forest). *Feat:* Alertness.

SQ–Magic Circle against Evil (Su): This ability continuously duplicates the effects of the spell. Iriandel cannot suppress this ability.

SQ–Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): Unicorns can *detect evil* at will as a free action. Once a day, a unicorn can use *teleport without error* to move anywhere within its home. It cannot teleport beyond the forest boundaries nor back from outside.

A unicorn can use *cure light wounds* three times a day and *cure moderate wounds* once a day, as cast by a 5th-level druid, by touching a wounded creature with its horn. Once a day, it can use *neutralize poison* as cast by an 8th-level druid with a touch of its horn.

SQ–Immunities (Ex): Unicorns are immune to all poisons as well as to *charm* and *hold* spells or abilities.

Tito Leati is currently meandering about the libraries, museums, and archives of Italy to earn his degree in Art History. He would like to thank his friend, Alberto Vitali, for his invaluable contributions to Iriandel's story.

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London Calling

Surviving the Age of Destruction

by Andy Collins

artwork by Ashley Wood, cartography by Craig Zipse & Travers Dow

"London Calling" is an ALTERNITY adventure set in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. It is designed for 4-6 heroes of relatively low levels (2-6). Heroes of higher levels, or those with access to advanced equipment, might have an easier time with this adventure. The group of investigators should contain a mix of professions, though Free Agents and Diplomats will probably be the most useful. The broad skills of Investigate and Lore will come in handy during this adventure; in fact, heroes without the Investigate-search specialty skill might have trouble finding some important clues.

Adventure Summary

As the title suggests, this adventure takes place in London, England. The action begins in mid-December 2001.

A diabolist named Tanji Viswanathan (originally from India, but a resident of London for several years) seeks to summon a greater demon named Kali to Earth. To do so, he must complete a ritual involving the slaying of four specific individuals whose identities were sent to him in a dream.

These four individuals are Kendra Myers, a 20-year-old student; Michael Grosvenor, a 30-year-old library assistant; Vivian Brunswick, a 40-year-old housewife and mother of one; and James J. Sibley, a 50-year-old minister of the British Parliament. Each individual was born at 12:01 A.M. on the 22nd of December, an important date in Hindi mythology.

To perform the murderous ceremonies, Viswanathan requires a specific ritual dagger and bowl. Using the divinatory powers of Diabolism—*tongue of the damned*, he determined that both items were recently purchased by Paramijt Singh, a London-based dealer of antiques from Southeast Asia. Thus, his first act is to gain entrance into Singh's antique shop (located in Soho on Argyll Street). This he accomplishes with the help of his shapechanging rakshasa servant/bodyguard.

To cover evidence of his theft, Viswanathan instructs the rakshasa to kill Singh and mess up the shop, creating the appearance of a robbery gone wrong.

Once the dagger and bowl are acquired, Viswanathan can hunt down his victims. By the time the heroes are brought in (see below), two of the four victims—Myers and Grosvenor—have been ritually murdered, their hands severed and consumed, and their hearts removed and burned in the bowl (with Viswanathan's *hellfire*).

At about the same time the agents are contacted, another individual—London native Reginald Falsworth—begins his own investigation. Falsworth, an expert on occult lore, was once a decorated inspector working for New Scotland Yard. Now, however, most see him as little more than a lunatic. He still keeps an eye on the local occult scene, though, and the murder of Kendra Myers catches his attention. After some investigating (and the killing of Michael Grosvenor), Falsworth learns of Viswanathan's plan (as well as the probable identities of the victims). Because of his ostracism by law enforcement, Falsworth thinks that informing the authorities (or the potential victims) is useless. Since he also believes that attacking the diabolist directly is impossible (due to the protection of the

According to Indian calculations, the world will soon enter the fourth age of the cosmos. This age is called Kali Yuga or Kali's Age: the Age of Destruction.

—The Book of Demons
Victoria Hyatt & Joseph W. Charles

rakshasa), he comes to what he believes is the only rational and logical–if grisly–conclusion: He must kill one or more of the potential victims before Viswanathan can sacrifice them.

The heroes' likely first encounter with Falsworth will come right before, during, or immediately after his attack on Vivian Brunswick (Viswanathan's third target). Though the heroes might suspect him of the earlier murders, Falsworth is innocent of any wrongdoing (until he goes after the third or fourth targets, of course).

Plot Structure

"London Calling" is organized into two acts of three scenes each. Act I centers around the heroes' briefing and investigation of the murders, and ends as the heroes discover evidence of Falsworth's grisly plans.

In Scene 1, the heroes gather at their local Hoffmann Institute office for a briefing, then travel to London (probably by plane, unless the Gamemaster's campaign is based within a train ride of London). There, they meet local Hoffmann operative Kenneth Landon, who gives them additional information.

In Scene 2, the heroes investigate the three murders: Singh's, at his antique shop; Myers's, at her flat (apartment); and Grosvenor's, at the British Library. The heroes will meet and interact with Detective Inspector Ben Thomason of New Scotland Yard (an ally of the Hoffmann Institute) during this scene. The heroes' investigation might also take them to other London locations for research purposes.

In Scene 3, the heroes find evidence of Falsworth's investigation and his plans to murder Vivian Brunswick to stop Kali from arriving on Earth.

The action heats up in Act II, as the heroes attempt to protect Vivian Brunswick from assaults by Reginald Falsworth and Tanji Viswanathan. Scene 1 involves the heroes' attempt to prevent Falsworth from killing Vivian Brunswick.

In Scene 2, Viswanathan and his rakshasa arrive at Vivian Brunswick's location to perform the ceremony. Depending on Falsworth's success, Viswanathan might visit Brunswick at her flat or a local hospital. The heroes must stop the ritual, preferably by defeating the diabolist.

The act (and the adventure) ends with a mop-up and debriefing in Scene 3. Of course, if the heroes were unsuccessful in stopping the diabolist in Act II, Scene 2, their work might not yet be done ...

Act I: The Investigation

This act introduces the heroes to the adventure and provides the scenes of investigation for their work. A number of individuals (both alive and dead) figure into this act, a list of which appears here:

Elaine Crichton, Agent in Charge, Intelligence Division (London office), Hoffmann Institute; DOB 21 October 1964 [Level 8 Free Agent]

Ben Thomason, Detective Inspector, New Scotland Yard; DOB 2 August 1971 [Level 7 Diplomat-Combat Spec]

Reginald Falsworth, private investigator (and former Inspector, Scotland Yard); DOB 22 Dec 1959 [Level 10 Free Agent]

Paramijt Singh (deceased), dealer of Southeast Asian antiques; DOB 16 July 1953 [was Level 7 Diplomat-Tech Op]

Kendra Myers (deceased), mechanical engineering student, University of London; DOB 22 Dec 1981 [was Level 1 Tech Op]

Michael Grosvenor (deceased), library assistant, British Library; DOB 22 Dec 1971 [was Non-professional]

Vivian Brunswick, nurse, St. Thomas Hospital; DOB 22 Dec 1961 [Level 2 Tech Op]

James J. Sibley, Minister of Parliament; DOB 22 Dec 1951 [Level 8 Diplomat-Combat Spec]

Scene 1: The Briefing

Read or paraphrase the following text to the players:

> You've been summoned to an early-morning meeting with your supervisor at the Institute. You're guessing this will involve travel, since the message you got last night told you to bring a few days of clothing and your passport. When you roll into the office at 6:00 A.M. you're still a bit groggy, but the grim expression on your boss's face dispels much of your exhaustion.
>
> "Thank you all for coming on such short notice," your boss says. Unfortunately, since my message last night the situation has worsened. While I had originally intended to send you out to investigate an unusual murder, I'm now sending you out to investigate *two* unusual murders."
>
> He pauses to sip his coffee, then continues. "As much as I'd like to sit and chat, your plane leaves in ninety minutes. I've included all the relevant information in your briefing packet, which is waiting for you at the receptionist's desk along with your plane tickets. I'm sure you'll have plenty of time to review it on your flight to London.
>
> "After you land at Heathrow, take a cab to the Hoffmann office in London. There you'll be greeted by Elaine Crichton, the agent in charge of our London operation. Elaine's a veteran of the Institute and should be able to provide you with both gear and guidance. Now, unless you have any burning questions, you should be on your way. Ready to go?"

The heroes' supervisor answers any critical questions the heroes have, but strongly encourages them to get moving–their flight leaves in 90 minutes.

He also recommends that the heroes leave their firearms at home. Not only will they have difficulties getting them on the plane, but it's illegal to carry them in England. If, in the course of their investigation, they find it necessary to arm themselves, the London office has the necessary equipment.

Unless the Gamemaster wants to insert additional action into the adventure, the heroes' flight to London is uneventful. The duration of the flight will depend on the location of the Gamemaster's campaign, but should give the heroes plenty of time to look over their briefing packet before they arrive. (Remember that London is 5 hours ahead of Eastern Time.)

Briefing Packet

The following is a summary of the pertinent facts contained in the briefing packet. At the Gamemaster's discretion, you can either read the information verbatim or divide it up between the heroes and let them share their findings. Most crime-related information is gleaned from New Scotland Yard files, while personal information on Singh is from the Hoffmann archives.

Victim #1: Kendra Myers

- Myers, 19, was an engineering student at the University of London.
- Slain at approximately 9 P.M. on Saturday, December 15 in her flat on Bedford Way in Bloomsbury (a district of London near the University of London).
- Body found at 9:40 P.M. by classmate Jeremy Burnham, arriving to study for upcoming engineering tests.
- Neighbors interviewed reported hearing no unusual noises or visitors around the time of death.
- Probable cause of death: massive bleeding caused by amputation of hands and removal of heart from chest cavity.
- Victim also had bruises on biceps, suggesting that she was gripped strongly by a powerful individual standing behind her. However, no defensive wounds or other signs of a struggle were found.
- Full autopsy report available from New Scotland Yard.

Victim #2: Michael Grosvenor

- Grosvenor, 29, was a library assistant working in the British Library.
- Slain between 9:45 P.M. and 10:30 P.M. on Monday, December 17 in a reading room at the British Library.
- Body found at 8:20 A.M. on Tuesday the 18th by another library worker.
- Probable cause of death: massive bleeding caused by amputation of hands and removal of heart from chest cavity.
- Victim also had bruises on biceps, suggesting that he was gripped strongly by a powerful individual standing behind him. However, no defensive wounds or other signs of a struggle were found.
- Partial bloodstained footprint found near body; print resembles that of a great ape, but the species is as yet unidentified.
- Full autopsy report available from New Scotland Yard.

Once in London, the heroes can take a cab to the local Hoffmann branch office, which occupies a single floor of an unassuming office building in London's financial district. There, they are greeted by Agent-In-Charge Elaine Crichton, a London native who runs the small, four-person office. The friendly Crichton shows the heroes around the office—which includes a reception area, meeting room, file room, and supply depot—before showing them into her private office and getting down to business.

After showing you around the branch, Crichton ushers you into her private office and closes the door.

"Thanks again for coming over on such short notice," she says. "We simply don't have the manpower to perform investigations of this nature. We'd normally pull some agents in from the Paris branch, but they're booked solid all month and we needed help right away."

She leans back in her chair and looks over your group. "I understand you've been given some information about this case—the names, dates, and places involved? Well, as you can see, it seems that London has become home to some sort of ritualistic serial killer or, more likely, a small group of like-minded cultists. It's a bit late to begin your investigations today, so I'd advise that you head to your hotel—we've already arranged for rooms—so you can get started bright and early tomorrow morning. If you have any specific equipment requests, I can try to handle those tonight and have the gear ready by morning.

"One more thing. We have an ally at New Scotland Yard—someone who's friendly to the Institute's cause. His name's Ben Thomason, and he's heading up the Yard's investigation of the killings. Give him a call tomorrow morning—he's expecting to hear from you—and he'll make sure you get the help you need.

"I'd put you in touch with our local expert on cult activity, as well, except that's not possible. Mr. Singh apparently surprised a burglar last Friday night and was killed. I don't have any reason to connect his murder with the others—the method of killing doesn't match at all—but if you Yanks wanted to include it in your investigation, be my guest."

Crichton then stands up and stretches, stifling a yawn. "Sorry, didn't mean to talk your ears off. Let's get you settled for the night, and I'll track down a car for you, along with any gear you think you'll need."

Crichton answers all questions to the best of her ability, although she reminds heroes that they really should turn in for the night if they have any hope of acclimating to local time.

The heroes' hotel rooms are clean but unremarkable, and barring any nightmares brought on by the grisly murders, they should sleep soundly. To simulate the effects of jetlag, you can require each hero to make a Resolve—*physical resolve* skill check. An Ordinary or better success indicates that the hero can operate normally in the morning; however, any Failure indicates that the hero suffers the ill effects of the time shift and has a +1 step penalty to all actions for the next 24 hours.

Scene 2: Pursuing the Investigation

The next morning the heroes can pick up their car—a Mercedes sedan—as well as any Common or Controlled equipment they requested from Crichton, though anything with an Availability Code of Military or Restricted will take her another 24 hours (minimum) to secure.

The heroes should contact Detective Inspector Ben Thomason to start their investigation. Thomason, a burly veteran policeman, is happy to give the heroes several hours of his time. Unless the heroes do something reckless to anger the inspector, he cooperates in any reasonable manner. He answers any questions about the police investigations, shares police and autopsy reports (see sidebar) on the two murders, and accompanies the heroes to either of the murder sites. (In fact, he is obliged to be present if the heroes poke around either of the crime scenes.)

As the Yard's principal investigator of serial murders, Thomason can provide expertise in areas—such as Law, Investigate, and Administration—that the heroes might be lacking. (Assume skill scores of 16 in pertinent specialty skills.) Still, don't let him do the heroes' work for them: Require the players to perform the deductions necessary to move the plot along, using Thomason only when the players seem stumped.

This scene includes investigations of all three murder sites. It is up to the players to decide which order they wish to follow (and it's certainly possible to go back and forth between them, though Thomason quickly grows frustrated should the heroes waste too much of his time).

Police Reports

The coroner's reports of the two victims read almost identical: Cause of death was massive bleeding caused by amputation of their hands and removal of their hearts from chest cavities. The instrument used was almost certainly a long, sharp knife or dagger used with some amount of skill. Traces of copper found in the wounds suggest that the blade was composed of that metal.

In addition, bruises on both victims' biceps suggest that they were gripped from behind by a very strong individual. However, no defensive wounds or other signs of struggle were found.

In both cases, toxicology screens were negative (no foreign substances in the bloodstream), and fluid and fiber analyses yielded no additional clues.

Thomason can also supply a police report for Paramijt Singh's murder, which includes the following pertinent facts:

- Paramijt Singh, 48, was an antique dealer who operated a shop in Soho.
- Time of death: approximately 8:45 P.M. on Friday, December 14 at his shop. Body found at approximately 9:30 A.M. on Monday the 17th by a customer.
- Probable cause of death: massive bleeding from multiple slash wounds across the abdomen.
- Current hypothesis: The victim interrupted a robbery in progress (as suggested by toppled shelves and ransacked storage). It is yet unknown what (if anything) might have been taken by the assailants.
- Analysis of the body found no defensive wounds or other signs of struggle.
- Fiber analysis revealed several reddish-brown animal hairs on the premises. Preliminary analysis indicates that they most likely belong to a primate, perhaps a baboon or orangutan.
- No signs of forced entry were found, suggesting that either the assailant had a key or was known by the victim.

Handout #1: Sotheby's Catalog

17. A SINO-TIBETAN GILT BRONZE FIGURE OF VAJRADHARA AND CONSORT, late 18th/early 19th century, seated in dhyanasana on a double lotus ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 17 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

18. AN INDIAN METAL RITUAL VESSEL, circa 18th century, brass bowl with Hindi inscriptions and slender serpentine feet, approximately ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 18 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

19. TWO TERRACOTTA HEADS, Rajasthan, circa 19th century, each with almond shaped eyes, triangular nose, plump cheeks and slightly smiling ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 19 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

20. A PORTRAIT OF A NOBLEMAN AND AN ASCETIC, Deccan, Hyderabad, circa 1800, the nobleman kneeling before the ascetic on a terrace, the ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 20 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

21. A MUGHAL STYLE DRAWING OF A PRINCE, circa 18th century, standing and facing left, wearing a flaring jama and turban, a sword and ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 21 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

22. A TIBETAN THANKA OF PEHAR, 19th century, seated on a white lion and holding a capa and sara, churi, khadga and danda, encircled by ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 22 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

23. FIVE TIBETAN COPPER, BRASS AND SILVER GAUS, 18th/19th century, each portable shrine decorated on the front with Tibetan characters and ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 23 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

24. A TIBETAN LARGE REPOUSSE GILT COPPER FIGURE OF VAISRAVANA, 17th/18th century, the guardian seated on a lotus throne, wearing boots, ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 24 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

25. A TIBETAN REPOUSSE GILT COPPER GUARDIAN FIGURE, 18th century, standing and wearing full armor, boots, long billowing sashes and large ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 25 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

26. A NEPALESE BRONZE RITUAL EWER, circa 18th/19th century, the flaring body chased with lappets, skulls and scrolling foliage, mounted ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 26 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

27. A TIBETAN IRON RITUAL SPEAR POINT, 17th/18th century, damascened with flames at the base of the faceted triangular blade, ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 27 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

28. A THAI SANDSTONE HEAD OF BUDDHA, Ayuthia style, with serene expression, triangular nose, full lips, downcast eyes and arched ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 28 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

29. A NEPALESE COPPER VOTIVE PLAQUE, late 19th century, rectangular centered by a bodhisattva inset with rock crystal, standing on a lotus ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 29 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

30. A TIBETAN ASTROLOGICAL THANKA, 19th century, a central stylized lotus flower with eight petals each containing a trigram, encircled by a ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 30 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

31. A MUGHAL STYLE COTTON HANGING, 1940, boldly decorated with a large poppy plant with three large red blossoms and five buds, all with ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 31 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

32. A TIBETAN PAINTED WOOD CABINET, 19th century, the central door depicting the face of a ferocious dharmapala with bulging eyes, open ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 32 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

33. AN INDIAN COPPER DAGGER AND SHEATH, circa 18th century, the steel blade damascened with Hindi characters and foliage, ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 33 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

34. A GANDHARAN STUCCO HEAD OF A WOMAN, 4th/5th century, her face with benign expression, downcast eyes and slightly smiling mouth, ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 34 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

35. A GANDHARAN GRAY SCHIST HEAD OF BUDDHA, 3rd/4th century, his oval face with meditative expression, heavy-lidded almond shaped eyes ... Arcade: Along the Silk Road: Asian & Islamic Decorations & Chinese Furniture—Lot 35 8-Dec-2001 [Sotheby's New York, NY]

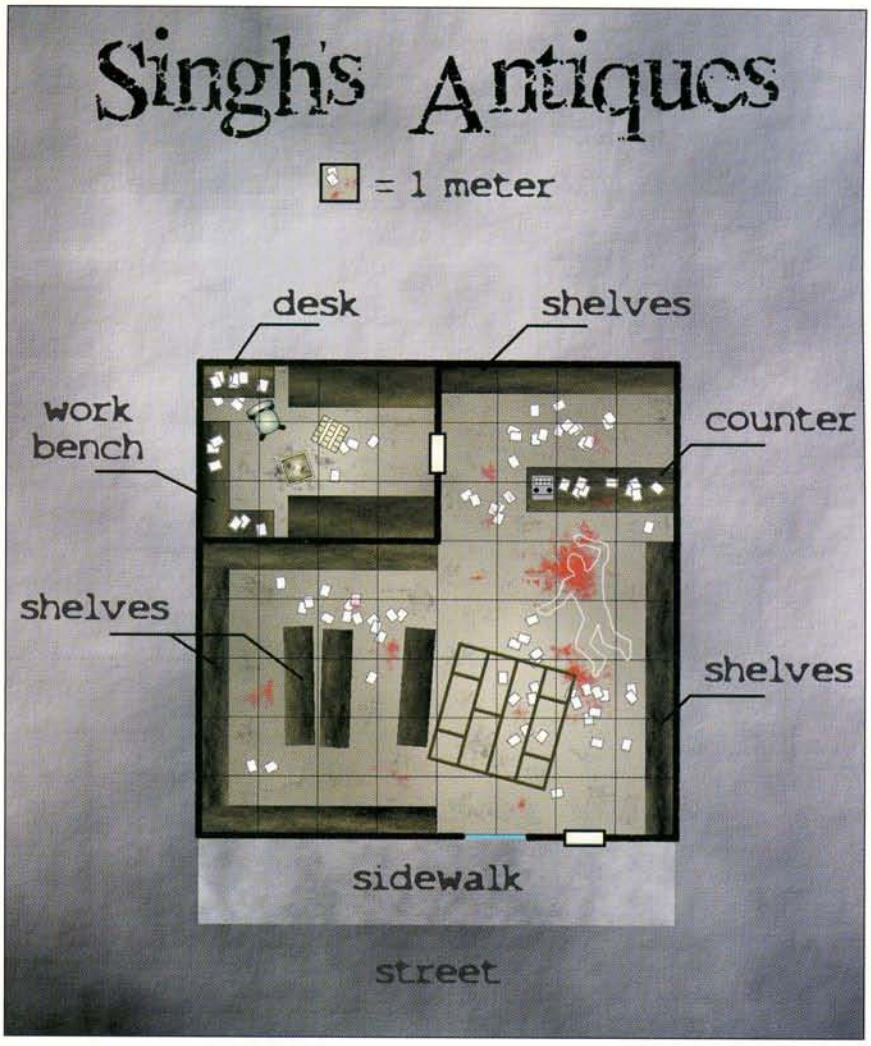
Site 1: Singh's Antiques

Long-time Londoner Paramijt Singh dealt in antiques from southeast Asia: India, Tibet, Nepal, and so forth. As explained above, Viswanathan needed a specific dagger and ceremonial bowl recently purchased by Singh from a Sotheby's auction in New York City. In fact, Singh was a regular at such auctions (which is easily confirmed by any hero with contacts in such circles).

Using his diabolic power of command, Viswanathan and his shape-changed rakshasa gained entry into Singh's shop just after closing time on Friday night. After the rakshasa killed Singh with a single swipe of his claw, the two ransacked the shop searching for the needed items.

Viswanathan eventually found what he needed in the shop's back room; the shipment from Sotheby's had just arrived, and Singh hadn't had time to put them out on display.

The shop is still cordoned off, though Thomason can get the heroes in without difficulty. As reported, the shop is littered with toppled shelves, scattered artifacts, and bloodstains. A successful Investigate–*search* skill check notes the following clues (one per degree of success, or as appropriate if the heroes search specific areas of the shop):



❯ There is only one entrance to the shop, and there are no signs that the lock was forced or picked.

❯ There are no bloody tracks in the shop, suggesting that the killer was careful to avoid the bloodstains on the floor.

❯ Singh's cashbox is still concealed under the counter, with over a hundred pounds locked within. Many clearly valuable artifacts are present, such as silver engravings, gold jewelry, and so forth.

The back room (accessed through a small door behind the counter) serves a dual purpose as Singh's office and storage room. This room is also ransacked, with papers and packing material strewn about (but no bloodstains). Again, an Investigate-*search* skill check will turn up the following clues (one per degree of success, or as appropriate):

❯ The overturned crate on the workbench was shipped on December 11th from Sotheby's in New York City. Still packed in the crate are a bronze vase engraved with skulls and leaves and a triangular iron spear tip decorated with a flame motif. A successful Awareness-*perception* or Knowledge-*deduce* skill check reveals that the crate appears overly large for only those two items.

❯ A piece of paper found near Singh's desk appears to have been torn from a Sotheby's catalog. (Photocopy Handout #1 and give it to your players at this time.)

❯ In the wastebasket is a British Air boarding pass in the name of Paramijt Singh from La Guardia to Heathrow (dated December 9, 2001).

Site 2: Kendra Myers' Flat

Kendra Myers lived in a typical student flat (apartment) near the University of London. Like the other crime scenes, public access to her flat is restricted, though Thomason's presence means the heroes don't have to worry about entering the site.

The small flat has only a living room (with fold-out bed) and bathroom. No skill check is necessary to discern that Myers died in the living room–the wood floor is soaked with a huge bloodstain, and a couple small splashes mar the walls and furniture as well. As with the antique shop, an Investigate-*search* skill check notes the following clues:

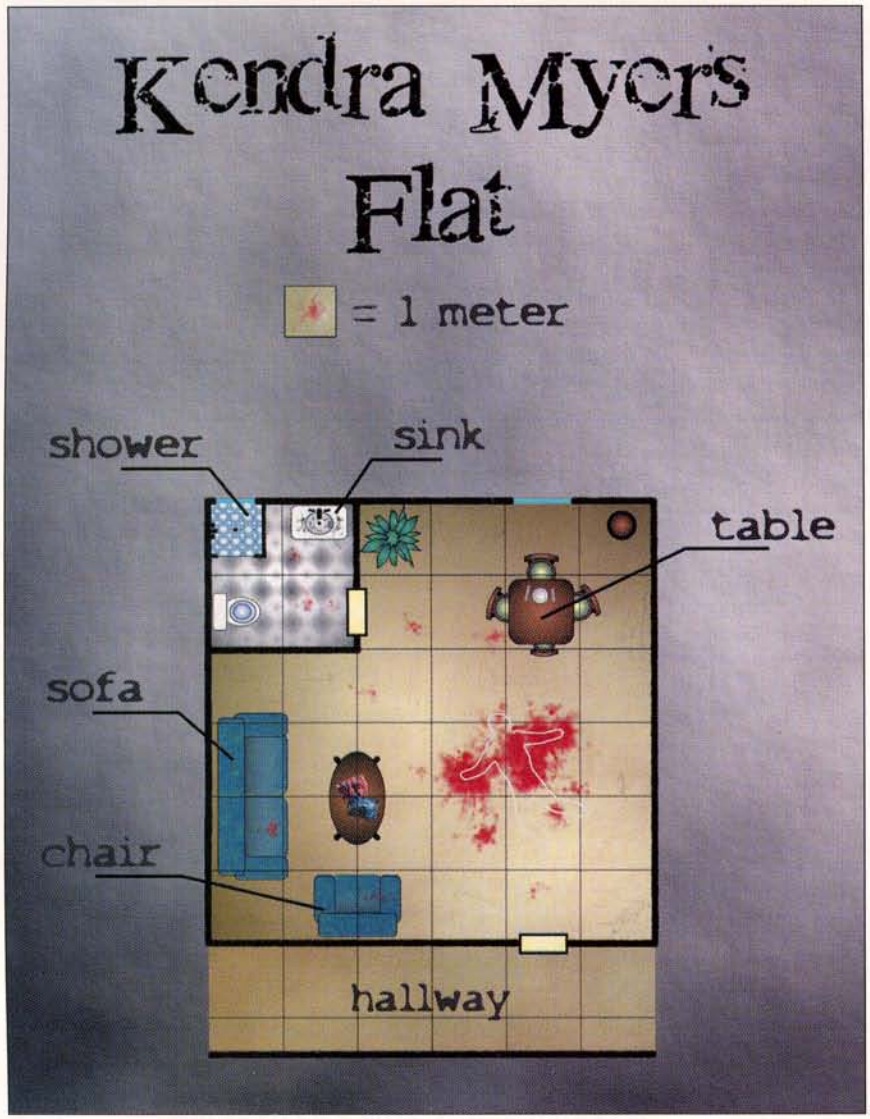
❯ There are no signs of forced entry through either the door or the single window in the living room. The bathroom window only opens a few inches, and there are no signs that it has been tampered with.

❯ There is less blood spattered around than might be expected for such a gruesome killing, suggesting that the victim didn't struggle much.

❯ The edges of the bathroom sink are slightly charred, as if they had been exposed to direct flame. There is also a small soot stain on the ceiling directly above the sink.

Site 3: British Library Reading Room

Twenty-nine-year-old Michael Grosvenor worked as a library assistant at the British Library. The killing occurred in one of



the library's reading rooms—a comfortable chamber with several overstuffed chairs and a fireplace. As the death occurred after the library's closing time, it is believed that Grosvenor was relaxing before returning home when he was attacked.

Library officials won't let the heroes investigate the scene unless Detective Inspector Thomason (or another Yard representative) is with them. Like Kendra Myers' flat, the room is marred by an enormous bloodstain—in this case, soaking most of the large rug in the center of the room. As with the other two sites, a successful Investigate—*search* skill check can reveal the following facts (one per grade of success):

- There is less blood spattered around than might be expected for such a gruesome killing, suggesting that the victim didn't struggle much.
- There is a partial bloody footprint just inside the door to this room, just as reported. It looks too large to be human, and a successful Life Science—*zoology* skill check can tentatively identify it as belonging to a primate, though the exact species can't be confirmed.
- Although the fireplace is empty of tinder or ashes (and indeed, hasn't been used in months due to a blocked chimney), the hearth bears a scorch mark, as if something very hot had burned there. Curiously, in the center of the scorch mark is a round, unmarred area about 8 inches across.

Other Investigations

It's possible that your heroes might decide to pursue alternative investigations during this scene. For instance, a hero might decide to research information on local cult activity, or Asian antiques, or primates. Use the following bits to help improvise, requiring roleplaying or the appropriate skill checks as necessary.

Cult Activities: London hasn't had any serious cult activities in well over a decade. No one in Scotland Yard can remember working on a case quite like this one. (Sadly, murders are far more common in the "Colonies" than in our parent nation of Great Britain.) Heroes seeking local experts who make a successful Interaction—*interview* or Investigate—*research* skill check turn up the name of Reginald Falsworth, a former Scotland Yard inspector who specialized in cult and occult activity. See Scene 3 for more information on Falsworth.

Sotheby's Auction House: The local Sotheby's office can confirm that an auction of antiques, including many pieces from southeast Asia, took place on December 8 in New York City, and (with a successful Deception—*bluff*, Interaction—*charm*, or similar skill check) will reveal that Mr. Paramijt Singh purchased four items: an Indian brass ritual bowl, a Nepalese bronze ritual ewer, a Tibetan iron spear point, and an Indian copper dagger and sheath.

Connections Between Victims: Thomason will confirm that no connections of any kind have been discovered between Singh, Myers, and Grosvenor. Heroes who choose to spend additional time looking for connections find only dead ends (and waste valuable time).

Primates: Both the hair sample and the bloody footprint might lead heroes (particularly fans of 19th-century mystery stories) to believe that a great ape of some sort is involved in the murders. Unfortunately, no amount of analysis can pinpoint the species of animal responsible for the print and hair, since they are from the apelike (but decidedly demonic) rakshasa.

Scene Conclusion

By the time this scene wraps up, the heroes should deduce that Mr. Singh purchased four items from a Sotheby's auction in New York just over a week ago, and that two of those items—a metal bowl and a copper dagger—have been stolen. If they've read the autopsy reports, they should link the dagger to the traces of copper found in the victim's wounds. They have also probably linked the hair sample found in Singh's shop with the apelike footprint at the British Library, providing a further connection between the killings.

Still, it's possible that the heroes might move on to the next scene without completing their investigations. Feel free to return to this section should the heroes think it necessary to backtrack.

Scene 3: Reginald Falsworth

The unusual nature of the Myers and Grosvenor murders should lead the heroes to suspect that these were rituals of some sort. Agent Crichton will readily agree with this supposition, noting that she thought the same thing. Unfortunately, the local Institute expert on rituals and occult activity was Mr. Singh, who is now sadly beyond questioning. She will advise the heroes to ask Thomason if he has any applicable sources of information.

If Thomason is asked about this, he will allow for the possibility, though he'll freely admit that such a topic is outside his area of expertise:

> "Yeah, we used to have a chap who handled that kind of thing. What was his name ... Richard? Randall? Emma down in Personnel should be able to track him down. Left the force about six, maybe eight years ago. Odd chap, to be sure."

Emma, a 60ish woman in the Personnel Department, can indeed track down the person the heroes seek. The request takes about 2 hours, though she'll put a rush on the search (reducing the time needed to 30 minutes) if one of the heroes makes a successful Interaction-*charm* skill check.

The name of the person in question is Reginald Falsworth. Though she can't release Falsworth's file, she can tell the heroes his age (46), appearance (170 cm tall, 80 kg, black hair), and his last known address (a flat on Blandford Street, just north of Hyde Park). She qualifies this information with the fact that the file hasn't been updated since 1994 when Falsworth left the Yard. (Any investigation by the heroes into the local occult scene also turns up Falsworth's name.)

Luckily for the heroes, Falsworth still lives at the same address. He's put on a bit of weight since his retirement, and appears much more rumpled and unkempt than during his police days, but he's still recognizable. Depending on when the heroes track him down, he might be in one of three locations:

- Before 7 P.M., Falsworth is in his flat making final preparations for his grisly task.
- Between 7 and 7:30 P.M., he is in a pub across the street downing some "liquid courage." (Afterward, witnesses will agree that Reg was drinking more quickly and more heavily than normal.)
- At 7:30 P.M. he sets off to intercept Vivian Brunswick on her way home from St. Thomas Hospital.

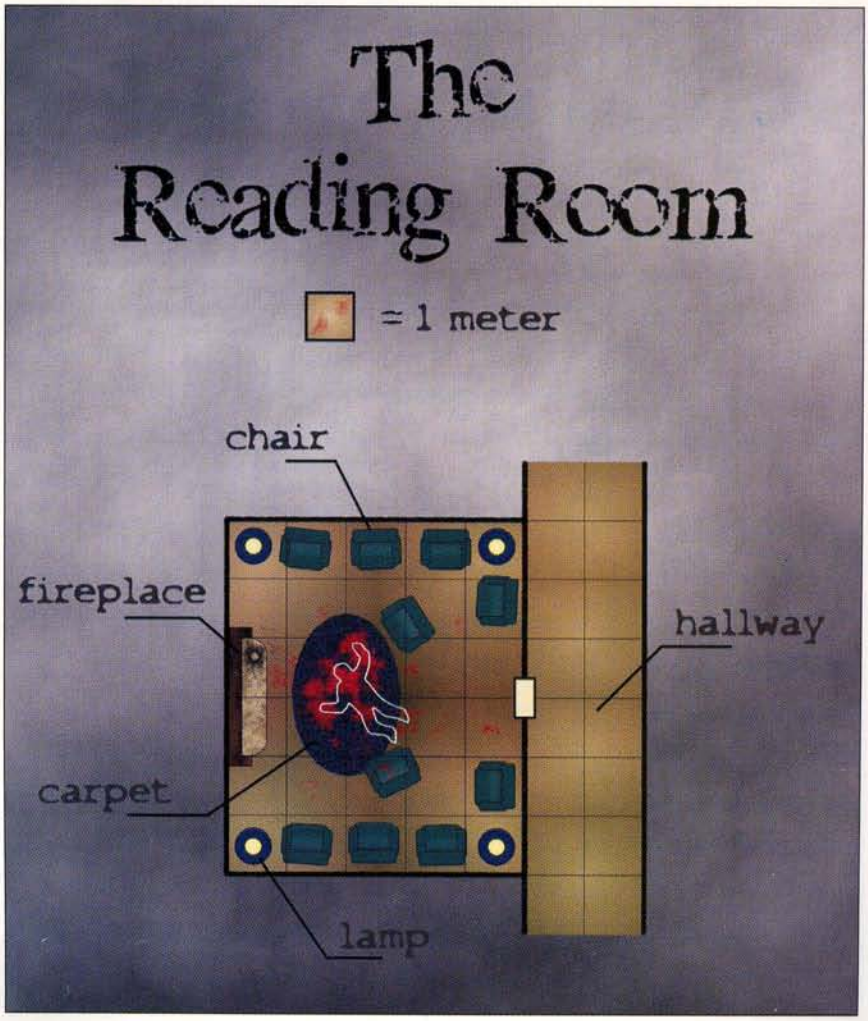
Clearly, this scene will play out quite differently depending on when and where the heroes encounter Falsworth (and indeed, on their initial attitude toward him).

Should the heroes intercept him before he leaves his flat, they can have a calm and rational conversation with him about the recent murders. He is naturally suspicious of strangers (especially groups of them poking around and asking questions), so apply a +2 step penalty to any encounter skill checks the heroes make. By seven o'clock or so, he suggests they move their conversation to the pub. (He doesn't intend to let the heroes prevent him from completing his task.)

If encountered while drinking, he is arrogant and blustery, demanding to know what business the heroes have interfering in his private affairs. However, he is much more talkative, granting a -1 step bonus to encounter skill checks. Again, at around 7:30 he begs off, telling the heroes that he "needs to meet someone."

Should the heroes manage to get Reg talking about what's really going on, read or paraphrase the following boxed text:

> Reg sighs and stares off into space. "You really want to know what's going on, do you? Fine, then, I'll tell you. As you've probably gathered, the killings are connected—all three of them—but Myers and Grosvenor are the important ones. Singh was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.



"You see, Kendra Myers and Michael Grosvenor are sacrifices—part of a ritual being carried out by a servant of the dark god Kali. This servant, no doubt a powerful diabolist, seeks to complete a ceremony that will bring Kali here to Earth. I don't think I have to spell out what that would do to the local property values." He pauses to sip his drink and then continues.

"Forget about going to Scotland Yard—they didn't believe my crackpot theories when I worked for them, and they're not likely to start any time soon. And don't even think about taking out the diabolist. Assuming we could even find him, he's protected by a rakshasa—a shapechanging demon that would tear us in half as soon as look at us."

His watery eyes suddenly grow clear and focused. "No, the way I see it, I've only got one option. The diabolist needs four sacrifices—specific ones—to complete the ritual, and I know who the other two targets are. Now, one of them is too well-protected to reach, but the other one's just a regular person. If I can eliminate her before the diabolist gets his hands on her, I figure I've got a good chance of putting the kibosh on the whole thing."

He pulls a snub-nosed .38 pistol from his belt. "That's where Blue Bess here comes in. Hopefully I can take her out in one shot, but if not, the second or third shot should do."

No amount of talking on the part of the heroes can dissuade Falsworth from his mission: He's convinced it's the only logical way to stop the diabolist from completing the ritual and summoning Kali to Earth. The heroes must restrain or subdue Falsworth if they hope to prevent him from executing his plan.

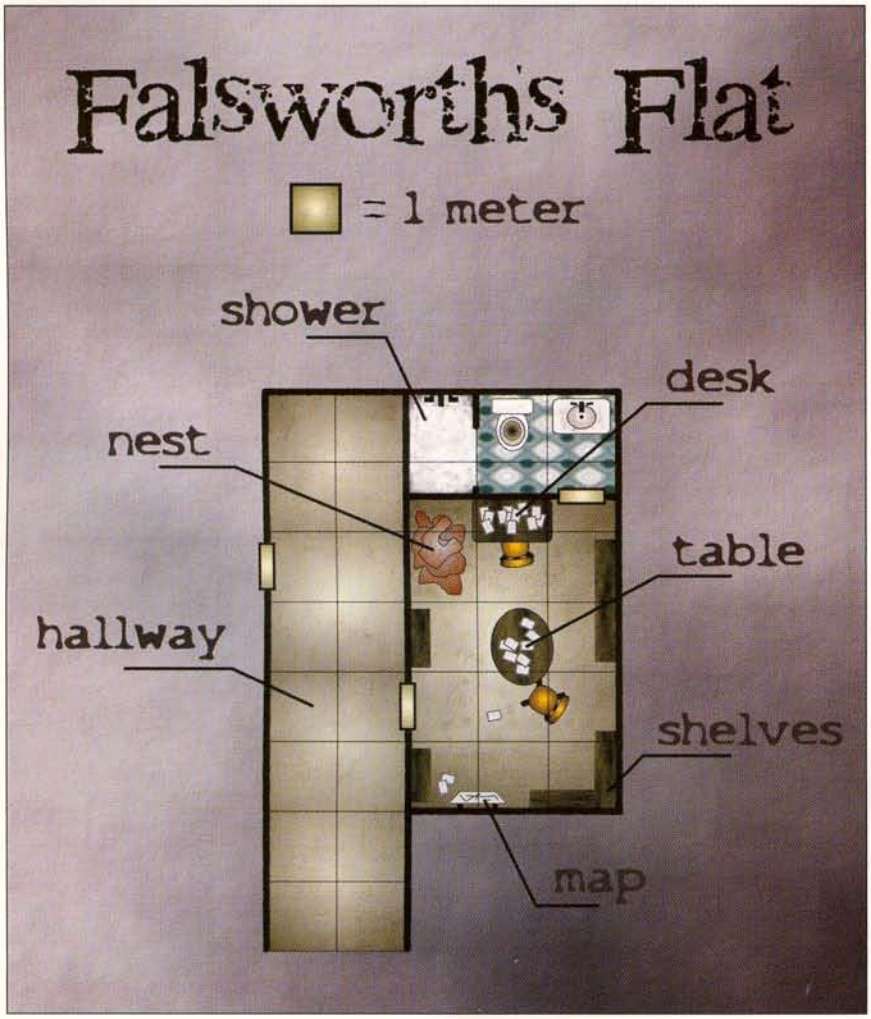
If the PCs ask for information about Kali or rakshasas, Reg shows them a page torn from a book he found in the British Library. He keeps the page folded in the right breast pocket of his jacket. Show players Handout #3 at this time.

If you need game statistics for Reginald Falsworth, use the Good Law Enforcer template from Chapter 6: The Supporting Cast in the ALTERNITY *Gamemaster Guide*, adding the skills of Knowledge—*deduce* 4, Investigate—*research* 3, and Lore—*occult* 4.

Falsworth's Flat

If the heroes have dawdled in their investigations, they might arrive at Falsworth's flat after he has left. In that case, they'll have to break in if they wish to investigate. (He won't return until well after he kills Brunswick.) The six-apartment building has a front and back door (facing the street and an alleyway, respectively); picking either lock requires a complex Manipulation—*lockpick* skill check (4 successes).

Once inside, the heroes can make their way to Falsworth's second floor flat (#23). This door has a higher quality lock on it, requiring 6 successes (at a +1 step penalty) to open.



Inside, the tiny two-room apartment is a mess. Dirty dishes are piled in the sink, maps full of pins cover the walls, and stacks of paper cover a table. No bed is visible in the room, though several blankets form a nest in one cluttered corner. Shelves are full of books and papers wedged in at every angle.

An Investigate—*search* skill check is needed to find anything useful in the flat. One clue is located per success or degree of success, or as appropriate (if the heroes search specific areas of the flat):

- One of the maps on the wall is of London, and has pins in the following locations: the British Library, near the University of London, Soho, St. Thomas Hospital, Page Street, and the Parliament Building. A path between the hospital and Page Street (only a few blocks away) has been drawn in red marker.
- A yellow sticky note near the phone with "Brunswick lv. hosp. @ 8 P.M., walks home."
- Falsworth's journal, the last few days' worth of entries in which are reproduced as Handout #2.

Act II: Things Get Interesting

The action in this Act centers around the heroes' attempts to thwart the plans of Reg Falsworth and Tanji Viswanathan.

Handout #2: Falworth's Journal

Sunday 16.12.01
11 a.m. Young student named Kendra Myers murdered last night. If I didn't know better, I'd say it was a ritual murder—hands cut off, heart cut out. Glad it isn't my job any more.

Monday 17.12.01
2 p.m. Lunch with Jerry at the pub. He's looking older than ever—wonder if I look the same to him? He confirmed that the Yard was thinking about cult connections. Maybe I'd better look into this.

Tuesday 18.12.01
9:30 a.m. Second body discovered, this one a 29-year-old library assistant named Michael Grosvenor. Same M.O.—missing hands, missing heart. I've got a bad feeling about this ... it's starting to sound familiar. Time to do some research.

2 p.m. The Yard doesn't know what they've got with this one. It's got the stink of Kali all about it. The style, the weapon, the dates—they all match. And the fiber sample! I'll bet the Yard doesn't have anything on file for "rakshasa."

5 p.m. No question, he's planning on bringing her here to London. The insanity! My old colleagues at the Yard would not believe this if I rubbed their noses in it. No, I'll have to handle this myself.

8 p.m. I've figured out the connection between Myers and Grosvenor: date of birth! Myers was born on 22.12.81 and Grosvenor on 22.12.71, and both at 12:01 a.m. Impossible to be coincidence. Now to get my hands on local birth records ...

Wednesday 19.12.01
10 a.m. Astounding what a few pounds sterling can get you these days. Thanks to the underpaid staff at the local hospitals, I narrowed the list down to several names. Based on the pattern so far, I guessed that I was looking for a '61 and a '51 birth, and my hunch paid off with two names:

Mrs. Vivian Brunswick, DOB 22.12.61, widowed mother of one, lives on Page Street and works at St. Thomas Hospital across the river.

James J. Sibley, Minister of Parliament, DOB 22.12.51. A member of the House of Lords, lives just outside London.

But what good does it do me to know who the next two victims will be?

6 p.m. I think I've just answered my own question. Since I can't hope to stop the diabolist, and there's no one else who I can convince of my findings, I'll have to stop the ritual by removing the targets.

I'll never get close enough to Sibley, so it looks like Mrs. Brunswick has drawn the short straw. It'll be a shame to leave her daughter an orphan, but it's better than letting a demon-god loose in London ...

Handout #3: Kali and Rakshasas

Kali is an emanation or aspect of Devi, one of the Asuras, whose name means "black." She was often called "Kali Ma," meaning the black mother. She has a dark complexion; long, loose hair; a blood-smeared, tusked face; and three eyes. She has four arms: one handling a sword; another holding the severed head of a giant; and with the other two, she encourages worshippers. She is naked except for a belt made of rows of severed hands and a garland around her neck made of human skulls and of snakes. She is usually shown standing over her husband, Siva.

Her first deed was her battle with Raktavira. Unfortunately, each drop of blood Raktavira shed gave birth to a thousand giants as powerful as himself. She finally overcame him by holding him up, piercing him with her spear and drinking all his blood (which is why she is often shown with her tongue lolling out and dripping with blood.)

After the fight, Kali danced a victory dance that shook the entire earth. Siva begged her to stop, but Kali did not see him and he was trampled underfoot.

From that time on, the gods would bribe or beg her to slay their foes. She gladly did this to satisfy her lust for blood.

Kali is waited upon by a great number of shapeshifting demons called Rakshasas, who feed upon flesh and are also known as Asra-pas or blood drinkers. Her worship includes orgiastic rites and human sacrifices, during which the victims' hands are severed and eaten while their hearts are cut out and burned in a consecrated brass bowl.

According to Indian calculations, the world will soon enter the fourth age of the cosmos. This age is called Kali Yuga or Kali's Age: the Age of Destruction. Most texts place the start of this age as December 22, 2001.

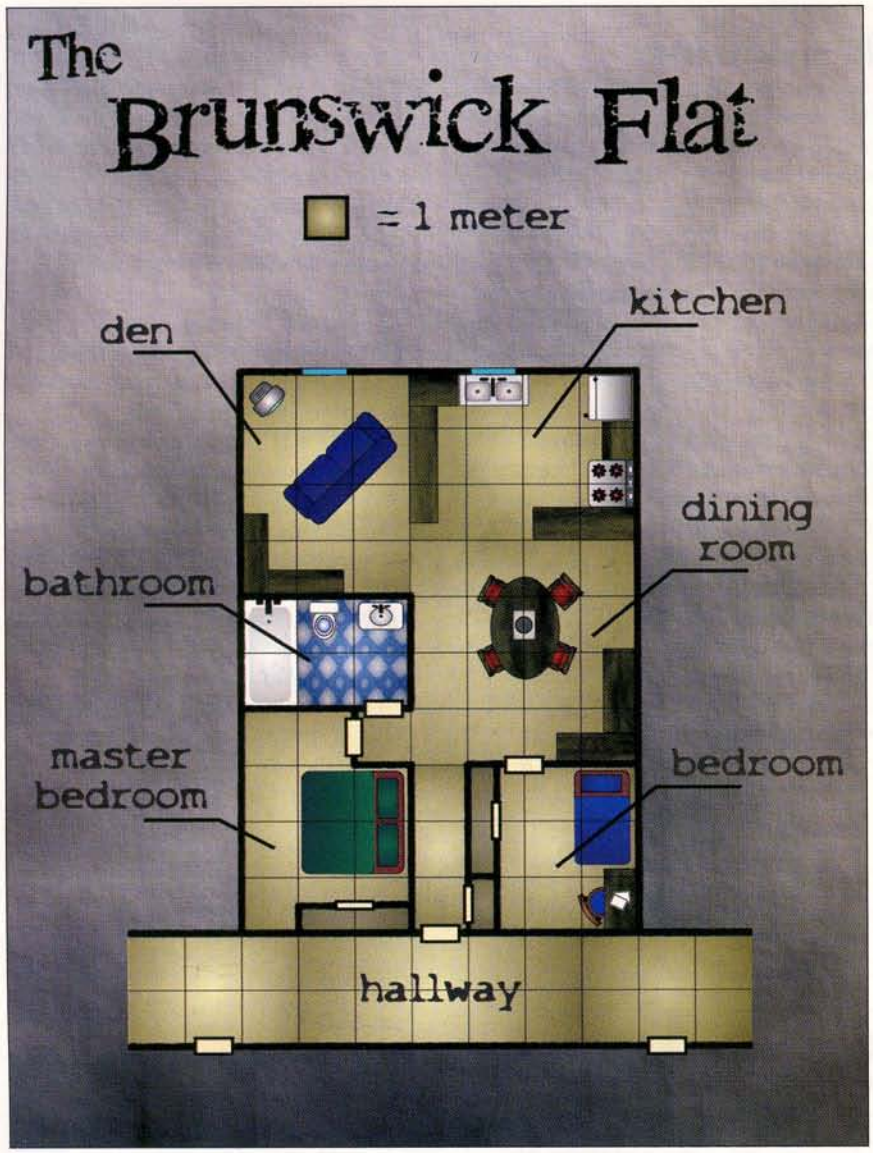
[from *Indian Mythology*, A.L. Trivedi, Ph.D.; ©1988 Panjabi Publishing]

Scene 1: Saving Vivian

After the discoveries of Act I, the heroes' most likely next step is to track down Vivian Brunswick, the target of both Falsworth and Tanji Viswanathan.

❯ If the heroes reach St. Thomas Hospital (Brunswick's workplace) before 8 P.M., they can intercept her before she leaves.

❯ Between 8 P.M. and 8:30 P.M., Brunswick walks home along the path drawn on the map in Falsworth's flat. During this time, Falsworth intercepts Brunswick and attempts to kill her. After pulling her into an alley, Falsworth shoots Brunswick twice before fleeing the scene, inflicting 4 mortal points and 6 wound points. This leaves her barely alive (with 1 mortal point and 3 wound points remaining).



flat to carry out the evil deed. Unless the heroes have done something to draw his attention, he isn't expecting resistance.

Identifying himself as a polltaker working for the British government, Tanji Viswanathan requests "just a moment" of Ms. Brunswick's time. As soon as she (or anyone else) opens the door, he uses his Diabolism-*command* spell to force the unfortunate person to stand quietly while he performs his grisly work.

Should Viswanathan encounter the heroes or law enforcement, he will order his rakshasa to attack anyone interfering, adding a blast of *hellfire* just to make sure. (Remember that Viswanathan must save at least 1 FX energy point to use his *hellfire* during the ceremony itself.) If he believes that Brunswick has been taken elsewhere, he will retreat to a safe location where he can use *tongue of the damned* to divine her current locale.

Alternative Locations

It is possible that, due to the activities in the previous scene, this scene might take place somewhere other than Brunswick's flat. For instance, if the heroes don't stop Falsworth from attacking Brunswick, she'll most likely end up in St. Thomas Hospital. If they manage to convince her of the danger, she might end up in a Hoffmann safehouse. In any case, should Tanji Viswanathan arrive at Brunswick's flat to find her missing, he'll use his powers of divination to determine where she is and hurry there. Remember, he must carry out the sacrifice at 11:00 P.M. in order to continue the ritual.

☽ **Assuming that the heroes prevent Falsworth from carrying out his plan, between 8:30 P.M. and 11 P.M. Brunswick relaxes in her flat, watching television with her 12-year-old daughter Veronica. (Vivian Brunswick's two-bedroom flat is detailed above.)**

Should the heroes reach Brunswick before Falsworth attacks, they have the difficult task of convincing her of the danger she faces. If this discussion goes poorly, or if Brunswick fears for her safety, she calls for help (summoning hospital security or the police, depending on the location), and wise heroes will retreat rather than force the issue.

Even if mundane methods prove unfeasible, it is likely that the heroes will have other ways of eliciting Brunswick's cooperation (from psionic or magical means to simply grabbing her). In addition, if the heroes tell Thomason what's going on, he gladly supplies them with a few uniformed officers to guard the woman.

Scene 2: Facing the Diabolist

At 10:30 P.M., Viswanathan and his rakshasa servant (in the form of a tall, heavily built British man) arrive at Brunswick's

Tanji Viswanathan

Level 16 Free Agent

STR	6	INT	10
DEX	10	WIL	12
CON	9	PER	13

Durability: 9/9/5/5
Move: sprint 16, run 10, walk 4
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2
FX energy points: 5

Action Check: 13+/12/6/3
#Actions: 2
Last resorts: 3

Perk: Second Sight

Attacks

.38 revolver	11/5/2	d4w/d4+1w/d4m	HI/O
Hellfire	13/6/3	d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m	En/O
Unarmed	3/1/0	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/O

Defenses

-1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills
Black warding: +2 to resistance modifiers vs. attack

Skills
Athletics [6]; Modern Ranged Weapons [10]–*pistol [11]*; Vehicle Op [10]; Stamina [9]–*endurance [10]*; Knowledge [10]–*language (English) [13], language (Hindi) [13]*; Medical Science [10]–*surgery [11]*; Awareness [12]–*perception [14]*; Lore [12]–*occult lore [17]*; Investigate [12]–*research [16]*; Resolve [12]–*mental [14]*; Deception [13]–*bluff [14], bribe [14]*; Interaction [13]–*charm [15]*.

FX Skills
Diabolism–*binding [16], black warding [14]; command [16], hellfire [13], summoning [18], tongue of the damned [14]*.

Rakshasa

Indian mythology tells the tale of the rakshasa, a demon that can take the form of any man or woman, and use that form to lure unsuspecting victims to its lair, where it devours them.

Description: Like all shapechanging demons, the true form of the rakshasa is in question. Various legends describe it as an animal-headed man or woman, which could be its true shape, or the shape with which it is most comfortable among mortals. The animal head is frequently that of an ape, tiger, or wolf—essentially, anything that strikes fear in those who see it.

Encounter: Unlike most other demons, the rakshasa makes its way to Earth by trickery. When careless diabolists attempt to summon demons, the rakshasa disguises itself as the intended creature and appears in its place. Should the diabolist not realize his or her error before releasing the demon from the summoning circle, the rakshasa is free to roam Earth—once the would-be summoner has been dispatched.

A rakshasa is a serial killer. It carefully and quietly stalks its victim, learning the mortal's habits, acquaintances, and most importantly, weaknesses. Then, when the rakshasa is ready to strike, it uses its mind reading ability to determine who the victim would trust most: a friend, a family member, a police officer, or such. Disguising itself as that person, the rakshasa approaches and lures the victim into its lair. The victim who escapes after that is rare and lucky.

A rakshasa is particularly difficult to dispatch, as reflected by its resistance modifiers. When a rakshasa is slain, it melts into a puddle of reddish-orange goo, which "evaporates" within a few hours, even in a sealed container. Freezing slows down the evaporation process so that it takes days, rather than hours, but is still not entirely effective.

Habitat/Society: A rakshasa is a solitary creature. It uses the possessions of its victims to fund the creation of a "safe house," a normal-looking place that it can lock from within. A rakshasa dwells in this place until its activities attract too much attention, then moves on or changes its identity and returns to the same dwelling. Because rakshasas are so careful about covering their tracks, a single rakshasa might dwell in the same place for several centuries.

Rakshasa Game Data

STR	12 (d6+8)	INT	10 (d4+7)
DEX	10 (d4+7)	WIL	12 (d4+9)
CON	12 (d6+8)	PER	12 (d4+9)

Durability: 16/16/8/8
Move: run 12, walk 4
Reaction Score: Ordinary/2
FX energy points: 5
Action Check: 13+/12/6/3
#Actions: 2
Last Resorts: 1
Psionic energy points: 12

Attacks

Bite	14/7/3	d4+1w/d6+2w/d4+1m	LI/O
Claws (×2)	16/8/4	d4w/d4+2w/d6+2w	LI/O

Defenses
+4 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks
+4 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks
Armor: d4+1 (LI), d4 (HI), d4+1 (En)

Skills
Athletics [12]–*jump [14]*; Stamina [12]–*endurance [14]*; Stealth [10]–*shadow [14]*; Awareness [12]–*intuition [15]*; Investigate [12]–*track [15]*; Resolve [12]–*physical [14]*; Deception [12]–*bluff [15]*; Interaction [12]–*charm [14]*; ESP [10]–*mind reading [16]*. Note that the rakshasa's *mind reading* score grants it the rank benefit of *probe*.

FX Skills
Arcane Magic (Diabolism)–*mask [18], trail [16]*.

Scene 3: Aftermath

All the heroes really have to do to stop Viswanathan from completing his ritual is keep Brunswick alive past 11:00 P.M. If this seems anticlimactic, consider having a vengeful Viswanathan hunt down the heroes who thwarted his plans for a knock-down, drag-out final conflict.

Should the heroes succeed, they are congratulated both by Inspector Thomason and by their superiors at the Institute. Of course, depending on the events of Scene 2–and how much attention and/or mess the heroes made in their fight with the diabolist and his rakshasa–Thomason's thanks might be tempered with "but maybe it would be best for you to avoid visiting London again in the near future."

If the heroes fail to prevent Viswanathan from sacrificing Vivian Brunswick, the Gamemaster might need to create an additional scene in which the heroes try to protect the diabolist's final target: Minister of Parliament James J. Sibley. In this case, Thomason and Scotland Yard definitely get involved (and might prefer that "independent operators" such as the heroes stay away).

Achievement Point Awards

Suggested rewards for heroes for the activities and potential outcomes of the adventure include the following:

- 1 achievement point for determining the occult nature of the killings during Act I;
- 1 achievement point for preventing Reg Falsworth from injuring Vivian Brunswick;
- 1 achievement point for preventing Tanji Viswanathan from killing Brunswick;
- 1 achievement point for capturing Viswanathan and/or destroying the rakshasa.

As a bonus, award 1 achievement point if the heroes manage to complete the adventure without drawing undue attention to their activities.

Adapting the Adventure for D&D

With a bit of effort, "London Calling" can be turned into a D&D adventure for four 9th-level PCs. Here is a short list of recommended changes to get you started:

- Replace the Hoffmann Institute with an appropriate investigative organization or guild, like the King's Watch.
- Substitute London with a medieval city of your choice. With a few minor changes, you can still use the map of London presented on the adjacent page; simply rename the city and alter the map tags.
- Replace ALTERNITY skills and FX with comparable D&D skills and spells. For example, Investigate–*research* can be replaced with the Gather Information skill, Medical Science–*surgery* with the Heal skill, and Diabolism–*tongue of the damned* with the Scry skill or the *divination* spell.
- Replace modern ranged weapons with their primitive counterparts (light crossbows instead of pistols, and so on).

Rakshasa: CR 9; Medium-size Outsider (Evil, Lawful); HD 7d8+21; hp 52; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 21 (+2 Dex, +9 natural); Atk +8 melee (1d4+1 [×2], claws), +3 melee (1d6, bite); SA detect thoughts, spells; SQ alternate form, spell immunity, vulnerable to blessed crossbow bolts, damage reduction 20/+3; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +6; AL LE; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 17.

Skills: Bluff +16*, Disguise +26*, Listen +12, Move Silently +11, Perform (ballad, chant, drama, epic, plus any other five) +12, Sense Motive +10, Spot +12.

Feats: Alertness, Dodge.

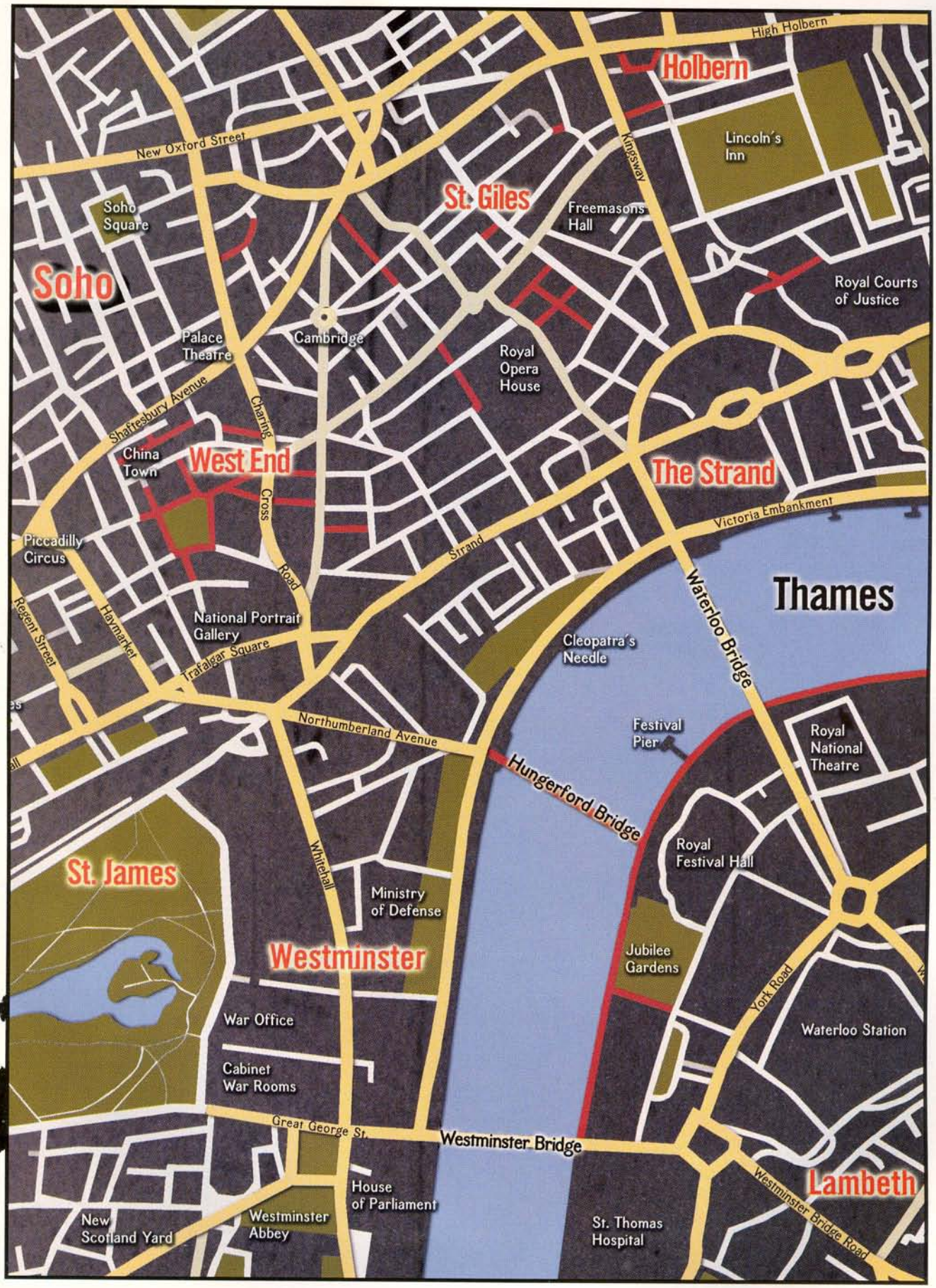
Tanji Viswanathan, Male Human Clr11 (Kali): CR 11; Medium-size Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 11d8; hp 47; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 for *magic vestment* spell, +2 *ring of protection*); Atk +10/+5 melee (1d4+2/crit 17-20, *+3 keen dagger*); SA spells; SQ rebuke undead; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +12; AL LE; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +5, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +5, Disguise +5, Heal +9, Hide +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Scry +4, Spellcraft +4.

Feats: Combat Casting, Endurance, Quicken Spell, Silent Spell, Still Spell.

Spells (6/6/4/4/3/2/1). Select appropriate spells from the *PH*. Tanji's chosen domains are Evil and Trickery.

Possessions: +3 keen dagger (copper-plated), *+2 ring of protection, +4 robe of resistance* (functions as *cloak of resistance*), brass ritual bowl.


High Holbern
Holbern
New Oxford Street
Lincoln's Inn
Kingsway
Soho Square
St. Giles
Freemasons Hall
Soho
Royal Courts of Justice
Palace Theatre
Cambridge
Royal Opera House
Shaftesbury Avenue
Charing Cross Road
China Town
West End
The Strand
Victoria Embankment
Piccadilly Circus
Strand
Thames
Waterloo Bridge
Regent Street
Haymarket
National Portrait Gallery
Trafalgar Square
Cleopatra's Needle
Festival Pier
Royal National Theatre
Northumberland Avenue
Hungerford Bridge
Royal Festival Hall
St. James
Whitehall
Ministry of Defense
Westminster
Jubilee Gardens
York Road
War Office
Waterloo Station
Cabinet War Rooms
Great George St.
Westminster Bridge
Lambeth
House of Parliament
Westminster Bridge Road
New Scotland Yard
Westminster Abbey
St. Thomas Hospital

KLASNICK

Depths of Rage

Hail the Trembling Heroes!

by JD Wiker

artwork by Bob Klasnich, cartography by Todd Gamble

"Depths of Rage" is a D&D adventure designed for four 4th-level PCs but can be modified for stronger or weaker groups as noted in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar. The adventuring party should include at least one fighter, one cleric, and one or more PCs with darkvision. PCs who complete the module should earn enough XPs to reach 5th level. The cave complex of the Broken Skull goblins can be in nearly any mountain range that includes forested slopes and is reasonably far from the larger civilized areas. Remember that the nearby village is only about 4-6 miles away from the entrance to the caves, which lies in an area where it cannot easily be discovered.

Adventure Summary

The PCs find themselves in a remote village (whichever one fits best in your campaign) where the best warriors have been lost in an ambush by a tribe of savage goblins. The villagers ask the PCs to end the goblins' attacks on the village, in exchange for any spoil, which could include a magic longsword, currently in the hands of the goblin war chief.

In the goblin caves, the PCs must navigate twisting passages to reach the war chief's hall and reclaim the magic longsword, Valor. But as the party begins the trek back to the surface, an earthquake pounds the complex, rearranging the caverns. Their escape route cut off, the PCs must find a different route back to daylight.

Adventure Background

A ferocious tribe of goblins called the Broken Skull—long ago defeated by a mighty local hero—have resurfaced to attack and pillage the settlements of a remote frontier land. Armed with the famous magic sword of Angrull, the very hero who vanquished them 150 years ago, the Broken Skulls' attacks have already claimed the lives of two dozen local villagers.

A few days ago, a scout discovered the goblins' lair in the caves a few miles from the village. The bravest warriors from among the nearest hamlets and steadings assembled to attack the goblins in their den. Several weeks ago they journeyed to the goblins' lair and have not been heard from since. Now the villagers are desperate for someone to stop the goblins before they attack again. Luckily for the villagers, the adventurers have just arrived.

The elders believe that if the adventurers can get the magic sword, Valor, away from the goblin war chief, the attacks will end. The war chief will no longer have his symbol of power, and the other goblins won't follow him.

The locals don't have much to offer the characters in the way of a reward aside from free meals and lodgings. However, the villagers have agreed that if the adventurers are successful, they are welcome to keep Valor and any other treasure they find in the goblins' caves.

The Broken Skulls

The Broken Skull goblins are barbarians. Each has a d12 Hit Die, fast movement, and the ability to rage once per day (for 5 rounds at a time). The more powerful Broken Skull goblins can rage more often and gain the ability of uncanny dodge. When the Broken Skull goblins rage, they each gain a +4 to Strength and Constitution, a +2 morale bonus to their Will saving throws, and a -2 penalty to AC. See Chapter 3 of the *Player's Handbook* (page 25) for more information on fast movement and uncanny dodge.

The Broken Skull goblins are savages, even among goblins. Despite a few half-hearted stabs at maintaining livestock—mountain goats kept in pens, mostly—the Broken Skulls have barely mastered fire, practice no agriculture, and eat whatever they can kill—including other goblins. Their language is a guttural, primitive version of the goblin tongue, and only their adept can read.

The goblin barbarians paint themselves with crude patterns, with their war chief, Skrok, bearing the most elaborate designs. Those closest to the war chief (cronies; they can't truly be called lieutenants) paint themselves less elaborately, having learned the painful lesson not to upstage Skrok.

The only member of the Broken Skulls who Skrok affords any latitude is his primary advisor, Skizzle, a wizened old goblin adept. Skizzle occupies a chamber near the front of the cave complex, accessible only by a narrow crevice in the rock. Visitors are rarely welcome.

For purposes of random encounters—or use of goblin barbarians in other adventures—the base Broken Skull goblin is presented on the next page.

Scaling the Adventure

This adventure was designed for four average 4th-level PCs, but the challenges are such that four average 4th-level PCs would need time to rest and recuperate periodically between encounters. The number of goblins encountered in the cave complex can be modified for parties of varying level as follows:

1st- to 2nd-level PCs: Encounters of EL 5 or higher are too tough for four low-level PCs. Consider halving or removing entirely the creatures encountered in areas **3**, **5**, **8**, **10**, and **14**. Make Skrok and Murkko 4th-level NPCs, make Grekt and Kusk 2nd-level NPCs, and take away Grekt's and Kusk's potions. Give Murkko one wolverine companion (see area **16**). Also, perhaps the villagers can offer the services of a cleric or furnish the PCs with some extra healing potions and scrolls.

3rd-level PCs: Encounters higher than EL 6 will probably result in party fatalities. You should consider giving the PCs greater access to healing potions or scrolls (perhaps the village has a low-level cleric) and reducing the number of goblins in areas **3**, **5**, and **14**.

5th-level PCs: This adventure will challenge 5th-level PCs. Do not modify the adventure, but be aware that PCs will probably complete the scenario with fewer rest and recuperation periods.

6th- to 7th-level PCs: This adventure will still challenge the party, particularly if it includes fewer than four PCs. If they are having too easy a time with the goblins, consider giving the goblins some worgs or having carrion crawlers emerge from the chasm (area **7**) after the earthquake.

This module contains roughly 30,000 gp in treasure. You will need to adjust the amount of treasure to match the party's starting level; use the following simple formula:

Total GP Value in Treasure = Party's Average Level × 7,500 gp.

Goblin Bbn1 (Barbarian): CR 1; Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 1d12; hp 6; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 small wooden shield); Atk +0 melee (1d6-1/crit ×3, handaxe or 1d6-1/crit 19-20, short sword), +2 ranged (1d6-1/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ rage 1/day; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +1*, Jump -1*, Listen +6 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +3* (includes +4 racial bonus), Spot +2 (includes Alertness feat), Swim* +1, Wilderness Lore +2. *Feat:* Alertness. *Note:* Skills marked with an asterisk include the -2 armor check penalty for wearing studded leather armor and carrying a small wooden shield.

SQ—Rage: When raging, the goblin barbarians are +2 hp; AC 14; SV Fort +4, Will +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6/crit ×3, handaxe or 1d6/crit 19-20, short sword); Str 12, Con 15.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, small wooden shield (usually covered in warpaint), handaxe (50% chance) or short-sword (50% chance), shortbow with 10 arrows, 2d6 sp.

The Earthquake

After the PCs have completed part of their quest, there will be a tremendous earth tremor that changes the caverns. The earthquake is completely unrelated to anything the characters have done, but the characters themselves don't necessarily know that.

When the earthquake hits, the walls, floors, and ceilings of the cavern complex shift. Some passages will be closed off, and new ones will open. The PCs can find their way out but won't be able to leave the way they came in.

Descriptions of the effects of the quake are included in the description of each encounter area, with the heading **After the Quake**. How the earthquake changes the environment itself is similarly noted in the "Cavern Features" section below.

Cavern Features

The caves occupied by the Broken Skull goblins lie roughly an hour from the nearest human settlement, partway up a heavily forested hill. The villagers, having already discovered it, can give clear instructions on how to find it. Otherwise, locating the entrance requires a successful Spot skill check (DC 18).

Inside the cave complex, certain environmental considerations will affect how the adventurers operate. Below are the most common cavern features and their effects on play.

Walls, Floors, & Ceilings

The goblin caves are natural formations. The surfaces are all rough stones from the size of pebbles to gargantuan slabs weighing hundreds of tons. The random movements of the earth over the centuries have left odd openings in the rocks. Some of these function as chambers or passageways. Others are merely strangely-placed "shelves" or pockets in the rock faces. The goblins use these to keep their most prized possessions—some of the treasures the adventurers find will be in the cracks and crevices in the walls and floors.

The ceilings in any given area are mostly uneven sections of stone, cut by fissures and frequently no more than 5 feet high. The floors are also extremely uneven, changing elevation by as much as 2 feet for every 5 feet traveled. Water drips from cracks in the stone, running down the walls like rain.

In many places, the floor is littered with loose, hand-sized rocks. When the floor isn't rough, it's muddy and dotted here and there with puddles several inches deep. Goblin footprints are everywhere, making tracking the overall movements of the goblins easier (-5 DC) but tracking specific goblins more difficult (+5 DC). For details, see the Track feat in Chapter 5 in the *Player's Handbook*.

Traveling quickly or without light is dangerous. See the "Moving in the Caves" section for more details.

Tunnels & Crevices

The passageways of the goblin caves are narrow, winding fissures in the rock. The goblins have performed only the most rudimentary stonework, moving just the larger stones, and only when it was absolutely necessary. The way these passages turn back upon themselves reduces visibility to 5d6 feet in any given tunnel, unless otherwise noted.

The widest passageways are tunnels roughly 5 feet wide. Frequently, though, chambers are connected by narrow crevices barely 2-3 feet wide. Fighting with Large weapons in these narrow crevices imposes a -2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls.

Passages often connect to each other or chambers at odd heights: below the rest of the floor, near the ceiling, and so forth. The Broken Skulls take this in stride, but the PCs might occasionally feel vulnerable as they squeeze one at a time through a crevice into a room filled with raging goblins.

PCs attempting to squeeze through a narrow fissure or crevice must make a successful Escape Artist check (DC 20). (Remember that untrained PCs can attempt this check.) Small characters receive a +10 bonus on the roll. If the check is successful, the character squeezes through onto whichever side she pleases. A failed check means that the PC still frees herself but suffers 1d4 points of subdual damage. One check is required to pass through a small opening, or one check for each 5 feet of distance traveled through a crevice.

Slopes & Steps

The chambers of the goblin caves are not all at the same elevation; hence, many of the passageways are sloped. In some places, the uneven flooring creates natural "stair-steps," but in other areas, the floor is sloped by up to 45 degrees.

PCs trying to move on slopes must attempt a Balance skill check (DC 14). Failure indicates that the character slips and falls to the bottom of the slope, suffering 1d6 damage for each 20 feet fallen.

Chimneys

In places, the tunnels form nearly vertical passages or chimneys. These require a successful Climb check (DC 20) to traverse unaided. Chimney heights are noted on the maps.

Bridges

In places where the tunnels don't quite meet because of some deep fissure, the Broken Skulls have lashed together crude bridges of rope and planking. These constructions are surprisingly sturdy—mostly due to the assistance of Skizzle, the goblin adept—but the bridges are built for small creatures. They are small, with rudimentary handholds set very low, and they sway and bounce dangerously when anything heavier than a goblin tries to cross.

A PC who crawls across the bridge moves only 5 feet per round but has no chance of falling. A PC walking across a bridge (using a standard move or double move) must make a successful Balance skill check (DC 15 for Medium-size characters, DC 13 for Small characters) or fall. If a PC tries to run across the bridge, the DC increases by 5. A new skill check is required for each round the PC remains on the bridge. PCs cannot take 20 on these rolls.

If the Balance check fails, the PC falls. Unless otherwise specified, these fissures are 1d6 × 10 feet deep. PCs who take the time to secure themselves with ropes can avoid taking damage from the fall.

Moving in the Caves

For each minute that a character travels at up to half his movement rate without being able to see, that character must make a Wisdom check (DC 18) or take 1 point of subdual damage from colliding with unseen objects. Possessing the Blind-Fight feat or having someone leading the blind character reduces the DC by 4. PCs with darkvision—such as dwarves and, of course, the goblins—need not make the check at all.

Running is more dangerous. For each round that a character runs, she must attempt a Wisdom check (DC 18) or suffer 1d4 points of subdual damage. If the character is running blind, the DC increases by 10. As mentioned above, being led or having the Blind-Fight feat reduces the DC by 4.

Lighting & Ventilation

The Broken Skull goblins possess darkvision and thus don't have much use for torches. Most of their tunnels are pitch black. However, they occasionally use fires for cooking, and their various "camps" in the caverns will sometimes have two or three fires going at once.

Fires in the caves produce a small ventilation problem. Smoke around the camp areas hangs about 5 feet in the air, which is no problem for the goblins but might hinder the taller adventurers. For the most part, the smoke drifts out through the passageways into the chasm (area 7), or through tiny cracks in the ceilings. Characters 6 feet tall or taller who spend

Random Encounters

The Broken Skulls don't really expect to find intruders in their caves, but the adventurers are still in danger of encountering goblins moving from place to place. For every 10 minutes the party spends in the cavern, roll a d10 and compare the result to the chart below. Add 2 to the roll if the adventurers are east of the chasm at the time.

Pre-Tremor Encounters

1-7	No Encounter
8	1 Goblin
9	1d4 Goblins
10	1d4+1 Goblins
11	1d6+1 Goblins
12+	Grekt + 1d6 Goblins

Post-Tremor Encounters

1-7	No Encounter
8	1 Goblin
9	1d4 Goblins
10	1d6 Goblins
11	Murkko
12+	Carrion Crawler

Encounters with goblins are always with Broken Skull goblin barbarians, who resort to their standard tactic of raging, followed by a full frontal assault.

Grekt is one of Skrok's cronies (see area 14). She tries to square off with the most capable-looking fighter among the adventurers.

Murkko, the half-orc ranger (see area 15), is working his way out of the caverns. If the adventurers do not immediately attack him, he proposes that they work together to get out of the caverns. If it ever looks like he can get out without the adventurers' help, he will take the opportunity and leave them to their fate. Otherwise, once outside, Murkko quickly blends into the woods and departs, perhaps to face the adventurers again some other day.

An encounter with the carrion crawler consists of the creature attacking from concealment in a crevice. A successful Spot skill check (opposed by the creature's Hide skill check) alerts the PCs to the crawler's presence before they come within range of its tentacles. If the PCs inflict any damage on the creature, it flees. Note that even if the PCs have previously killed a carrion crawler, this encounter can happen again. Although the goblins know only about one carrion crawler, there are others lower down in the chasm (area 7).

an hour breathing the smoke takes 1d6 points of subdual damage but can otherwise pass through unharmed.

Goblin Tactics

The Broken Skull goblins believe in personal glory as the path to fortune. The bravest warriors become the war chief's cronies and get a share of the haul when the tribe goes raiding. Consequently, Broken Skulls rarely run away from battle.

When goblins suspect the presence of intruders, they send one or two scouts ahead. If the scouts encounter trouble, the sounds of their blood-mad howling—or their failure to return—indicates to the others that they should prepare for battle. When a goblin barbarian knows that he is about to enter combat, he howls a war cry, activating his rage ability. Then he charges into battle, fighting until he or his opponent is dead.

To the interloper in the caves, it's quite an eerie scene: the caverns suddenly echo with a chorus of shrill howls, and a moment later, brightly-painted, blood-mad goblins come at them. Skrok and his cronies, Murkko the half-orc, and Skizzle the adept use different tactics, and how they fight will be noted in the text along with their descriptions.

Two rounds after the start of an encounter with one or more raging goblins, roll for random encounters, adding a +1 modifier to the roll for every two raging goblins.

The Goblin Caverns

There are two maps of the goblin caves: Map 1 shows the layout before the earthquake, while Map 2 shows how things have changed after the quake.

1. Cave Entrance.

The entrance to the goblins' lair appears to be a fairly large cavern mouth, perhaps 20 feet across and 6 feet high. The area is obscured by the thick forest growth.

The cave mouth quickly opens into a wider cavern, the back of which is supported by four natural pillars of rock (as shown on the map). As the PCs approach within sight of the rocky pillars, read the following:

Four natural pillars of rock support the back of this cavern, which is 20 feet high. The pillars also surround an open area with an uneven floor. A wildly painted goblin carrying a bucket moves out of the shadows at the back of the cave and disappears among some rocks to one side.

The Broken Skull goblins guard the entrance in a lackluster manner, expecting that anyone foolish enough to enter their lair will encounter a sizeable force of sentries soon enough.

The passage leading to the corral (area 2) has a crudely built gate across the opening. A successful Listen check (DC 10) at the gate detects the sound of goats, and if the PCs wait here for more than a few minutes, the goats come up the passage and try to force their way through the gate.

The passage leading to area 3 is a mere 2 feet high and slopes downward at a 45-degree angle. A low moaning sound comes from it as the wind passes through the cave mouth and across the tunnel entrance.

Creatures (EL 2): Two goblins lurk in the back of this cavern. One is sitting on a large rock, re-stringing his bow. The other is emerging from the passage to the corral (area 2), having just fed the goats. He is carrying a short, thorny switch that he uses to keep the goats at bay.

Goblin Barbarians (2): hp 5 (7), 3 (5). The numbers given in parentheses indicate the goblins' hit points when raging. Each goblin carries a small wooden shield, short sword, shortbow, and 10 arrows.

Tactics: If combat begins, the two goblins begin to howl loudly, activating their rage ability. Remember to roll for a random encounter 2 rounds afterward. (Any goblins that appear come from area 3; remember to subtract them from the number of goblins there.)

Treasure: When the fight is over, the PCs discover that neither goblin carries anything of particular value. Both are wearing fur kilts and carry the odd copper coin.

After the Quake:

The cave mouth is littered with bits of rubble. In the distance, the PCs can hear the sounds of the villagers, coming to see who survived the tremor.

2. Corral. The goblins use this unremarkable, 10-foot-high cavern as a corral for livestock. As the PCs open the gate to the passageway, the sixteen mountain goats in the corral (see **Creatures** below) enter the tunnel from the other direction, intent on escaping. The corral itself contains nothing of any value.

A PC can use the thorn switch left by the goblins in area 1 (or any similar prodding weapon) to divert the goats and thus avoid their "stampede." Other PCs must attack the goats or flee back up the tunnel until the goats have passed.

Anyone who stands their ground without a way to divert the goats must attempt a Dexterity check (DC 12). Any PC who fails the check suffers 2d6 points of subdual damage from being bowled over and trodden upon by the animals.

Creatures (EL 4): The mountain goats don't attack, as such; rather, they simply move en masse toward the exit, putting the PCs in danger of being knocked over and trampled. Once the goats are outside, they flee into the wilderness.

Mountain Goats (16): CR 1/4; Small Animal (3 ft. tall); HD 1d8+2; hp 6 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (+2 natural, +1 Dex); Atk +1 melee (1d6, horns); AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 8, Cha 4.

Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5.

After the Quake:

Unless the PCs have previously released the goats, the corral is full of panicked animals. Again, the frenzied goats don't attack the PCs, but careless PCs might find themselves caught in a stampede. Because the goats are much more frenzied, the Difficulty Class for the Dexterity check to avoid being bowled over and trampled increases to DC 15.

3. Sentry Post A. Twelve goblins stand guard in this irregular, 10-foot-high cave and furiously attack any strangers who enter. If not surprised, the sentries use various ledges and outcroppings to their advantage, gaining one-quarter cover (+2 cover bonus to AC, +1 cover bonus to Reflex saving throws) plus higher ground (+1 circumstance bonus to melee attack rolls). The goblins carry the **Treasure**.

Creatures (EL 8): Each goblin carries a small wooden shield, handaxe, short sword, shortbow, and 10 arrows.

Goblin Caverns: Map 1

5. Goblin Camp A. Twelve goblins loll about this uneven, 30-foot-high cavern, cooking over low fires or scrapping with one another.

The four passages on the north and west walls of this area are particularly narrow, requiring successful Escape Artist checks (as detailed in the "Tunnels & Crevices" section) to pass through. Surviving goblins are quick to attack PCs caught in the passages.

Creatures (EL 8): If any of the goblins manage to survive an encounter long enough for their barbarian rage to wear off, they flee to area 4 or 6.

Goblin Barbarians (12): hp 6 (8) each. The number given in parentheses indicates the goblins' hit points when raging.

After the Quake:

The cavern is completely collapsed. (PCs in this cave when the earthquake begins must leave immediately; those who remain must make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15) each round or suffer 2d6 points of damage. On the fifth round, anyone still inside the cavern is crushed to death.)

Goblin Barbarians (12): hp 6 (8) each. The number given in parentheses indicates the goblins' hit points when raging.

Treasure: Each goblin carries 2d6 sp. (If the PCs pillage all of the goblins, assume that the total haul amounts to 112 sp.) One of the goblins (determined randomly) carries a 100-gp topaz gem, while another carries a platinum hairpin worth 225 gp.

After the Quake:

The tunnel leading to area 1 is simply gone, the walls having closed together during the earthquake. For each minute the PCs tarry in here, roll on the "Random Encounters" table.

4. Muddy Cave. This 10-foot-high cave receives plenty of traffic, as evidenced by the countless footprints in the muddy floor. Most of the traffic lies between the tunnels to areas 3 and 5, with a lesser volume traveling to area 7. The passages leading to and from this cave are narrow, requiring an Escape Artist check to pass through. (For details, refer to the "Tunnels & Crevices" section.)

Treasure: Any PC searching the mud can attempt a Search skill check (DC 15). A successful roll uncovers a silver piece, a rusted dagger, an old human jawbone, and a mud-covered pouch holding five 100-gp pearls (500 gp total).

After the Quake:

The cavern is simply gone. Huge slabs of stone fill the cavern and nearby tunnels, completely blocking the way. (PCs in this cave when the earthquake begins must leave immediately; those who remain must make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15) each round or suffer 2d6 points of damage. On the fifth round, anyone still inside the cavern is crushed to death.)

6. Adept's Lair.

The narrow crevice opens onto a large cavern, 25 feet across and 35 feet deep, with a mostly even floor. Several low fires burn here and there, shedding just enough light to cast deep shadows. The walls, ceiling, and floor are decorated with hundreds of painted patterns—swirls, circles, squares, dots, lines, and crude representations of skulls. Scattered here and there throughout the cavern are bones, feathers, furs, bits of wood, and pieces of crockery.

This chamber is the lair of Skizzle, the adept of the Broken Skull goblins. Skizzle has lived here more or less his entire life, having taken over the ownership of the cavern from the last goblin adept. All of the exits from this room are narrow openings, requiring Escape Artist checks (as detailed in the "Tunnels & Crevices" section) to traverse.

When the PCs enter, Skizzle (see **Creature** below) is sitting on a small ledge above the entrance, waiting for a potion to simmer. He is taken off guard by the sudden appearance of non-goblins in his cave and elects to remain quiet until he determines their intentions.

The crockery appears to contain blood but actually holds raw batches of *potions of bull's strength*, not yet suitable for use. Skizzle colors them a dark crimson because Skrok and his cronies like the idea that it is made of blood. Someone with the Brew Potion feat could easily finish the process with 4 hours of work, without spending the costs for raw material or experience. The potions must be smeared on each user's muscles; Skrok and his cronies paint it on. There is enough of the unrefined potion here to make 4 applications.

Creature (EL 3): When the tribe needs an informed opinion on something less concrete than disposing of prisoners or dividing treasure, they turn to Skizzle. For example, when Broken Skull goblins reach adulthood, they come to the shaman's cave to receive the pattern they will paint on their bodies from that point on. Skizzle usually just lets each goblin pick whichever pattern they like, then makes cryptic but encouraging comments, like "Ah! A warrior's mark! You are destined for greatness."

This prestige makes Skizzle the war chief's top advisor—not that Skrok particularly listens to the adept. Skrok's only interest in Skizzle is his potions (particularly *potions of bull's strength*), which he uses to maintain his leadership of the tribe. Were the PCs to kill Skizzle, the goblins would eventually turn on Skrok, and the attacks on the village would decrease radically. This would take weeks, which wouldn't help the villagers.

Skizzle's bat familiar can be found with Skrok in area **14**. The adept uses his familiar to spy on the war chief and his cronies.

Skizzle, Male Goblin Adp4: CR 3; Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 4d6-1 (includes Toughness feat); hp 16; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 size); Atk +0 melee (1d4-2/crit 19-20, dagger); +2 ranged (no weapon); AL CN; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 7, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Alchemy +4, Concentration +1, Diplomacy +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +4 (racial bonus), Spellcraft +2. *Feats:* Alertness (afforded by familiar), Brew Potion, Toughness.

Spells (3/3/1): 0—*detect magic, mending, read magic;* 1st—*bane, cause fear, divine favor;* 2nd—*inflict moderate wounds.*

Possessions: Dagger, magnifying glass, *potion of bull's strength, potion of cure light wounds, potion of sanctuary,* bone necklace, pouch containing 20 gp and 45 sp.

Tactics: If the PCs seem content to loot the place and be on their way, Skizzle lets them go. Should they notice him or disturb his brewing potion, he initiates a conversation. Skizzle is a useful source of information. He has a vested interest in getting out from under Skrok's thumb (see below), and if the adventurers are here to kill Skrok, Skizzle sees no reason to interfere. If they tell him that they are here for the war chief's sword, Skizzle tells them where to find Skrok ("beyond the chasm, in the deepest cavern") and what kind of resistance to expect ("Skrok uses my potions to increase his strength and the strength of his two cronies, Grekt and Kusk"). Skizzle does not know that Skrok's friend, Murkko, is in the caves just now.

Skizzle trades two of his potions (*bull's strength* and *cure light wounds*) to the PCs in exchange for Skrok's death, but he insists that the PCs leave something of value. "You can have it back when you bring me proof that Skrok is dead." If the PCs demur, Skizzle settles for anything he can use to escape the war chief.

If the adventurers simply try to take the potions or otherwise attack him, Skizzle uses a *potion of sanctuary* to flee unhindered. Then he hurries to area **14**, where he informs Skrok that adventurers are on their way.

Development: The advice Skrok has been ignoring lately is that the caverns are not safe. Skizzle has noticed that the walls are slowly moving, that the ceilings change height, and that the occasional shaking the goblins feel in the lower caverns is increasing. Skizzle believes that the gods are about to drive the Broken Skulls out of their caves by dropping the mountain on their heads. Unfortunately, he has been unable to convince Skrok. Skrok sees Skizzle's predictions as a way for the adept to avoid making more potions and refuses to let Skizzle leave. Now Skizzle has nothing to do but make potions and wait for the gods to crush him.

After the Quake:

The earthquake completely smashes Skizzle's cave, except for a narrow stretch along the ceiling—essentially, a horizontal crevice. If the PCs left the adept alive, by the time they return here, Skizzle—miraculously untouched by the damage—has used this crevice to escape, running through areas 2 and 3 and on to freedom.

7. Chasm.

The tunnel widens into a great chasm. The ceiling is lost in darkness, and the floor drops about 100 feet to a murky, underground lake. Firelight glimmers here and there at various levels, and the sound of tittering goblin laughter echoes through the darkness. A simple rope-and-plank bridge crosses the expanse.

The Broken Skulls treat the chasm as a huge open-air garbage disposal. Into its depths they hurl bones, refuse, and anyone who displeases the war chief. They also think of it as the dividing line between the tough goblins and those who have yet to prove themselves; the stronger goblins live on the east side of the chasm, the weaker on the west.

Spanning the chasm are three old rope-and-plank bridges suspended 100 feet above the surface of the lake. The rules for crossing the bridges are found in the "Bridges" section. Any PC who falls from the bridge splashes into the lake, taking 2d3 points of subdual damage plus 7d6 points of normal damage. A PC with the Swim or Tumble skill can attempt a skill check (DC 25) to turn a fall into a dive, taking no damage. In either case, you should make Listen checks (DC 15) for the goblins in areas **8-9**. (One roll per group will suffice.) If they hear the splash, they investigate—meaning they might spot other characters on the bridge and move to intercept.

PCs in the water must attempt a Swim check (DC 10) with a -1 penalty for each 5 pounds of gear the character is carrying. If a PC fails this check by 5 or more, the PC goes under. See the Swim skill description in the *Player's Handbook* (page 74) and the Drowning Rule in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (page 85) for details.

Climbing the walls of the chasm, either down to the water level or back up to the bridge, requires a successful Climb check (DC 15).

Development: After 1d6 characters have started across the bridge, read or paraphrase the following:

The bridge suddenly shivers, and a low grinding noise reverberates throughout the chasm. From somewhere below comes a single loud splash, and the bridge begins to sway alarmingly.

The initial foreshock presaging the earthquake has just occurred, shifting the chasm walls an inch or two and sending a large boulder crashing into the underground lake. Any PC on the bridge at this time must attempt a Dexterity check to hang onto the swaying bridge (DC 17, or DC 20 if the PC continues moving). The swaying settles down enough to carry on after 2 rounds, meaning any PC on the bridge must make two more

Dexterity checks to hang on. The loud splash from the falling rock might catch the attention of the goblins in areas 8-9, as noted above.

After the Quake:
The chasm widens with the earthquake, tearing loose the main bridge and the bridge between areas 8 and 9, leaving only the bridge at the far south end of the chasm.

8. Goblin Camp B. Nine goblins camp here, eating, sleeping, and scrapping on the edge of the chasm.

Creatures (EL 6): Each goblin carries a small wooden shield, handaxe, shortbow, and 10 arrows apiece.

Goblin Barbarians (9): hp 7 (9) each. The number given in parentheses indicates the goblins' hit points when raging.

Treasure: The goblins wear worthless bone jewelry and carry 2d6 sp apiece. (If the PCs collect all of the coins, assume the goblins have 63 sp total.)

After the Quake:
The bridge to area 9 has been destroyed. However, the chasm's southernmost bridge (which is visible from this location) remains intact. A section of the wall has broken away to the south, allowing easier access to another ledge. The PCs can use the Jump skill (DC 20), Climb skill (DC 25), or otherwise work their way across here to reach the remaining bridge.

9. Goblin Camp C. Six goblins camp here, and if the goblins on the other side of the chasm are in trouble, they begin rushing over the bridge to help. The goblins carry **Treasure #1.**

At the back of the goblins' cave is a tunnel that heads west and ends in a small cul-de-sac. A successful Search check (DC 15) in the cul-de-sac turns up the **Treasure #2.**

Creatures (EL 4): These goblins carry small wooden shields, short swords, shortbows, and 10 arrows apiece.

Goblin Barbarians (6): hp 7 (9) each. The number given in parentheses indicates the goblins' hit points when raging.

Treasure #1: The goblins wear worthless bone jewelry and carry 2d6 sp apiece. (If the PCs collect all of the coins, assume the goblins have 42 sp total.)

Treasure #2: PCs find a silver ring wedged among the rocks in the cul-de-sac. This ring, which radiates faint Necromancy magic when a *detect magic* spell is cast, can be used to cast *cure minor wounds* once per day.

After the Quake:
The bridge to area 8 has been destroyed. The quake also opens a tunnel leading to area 6.

10. Goblin Camp D. This 10-foot-high cavern houses twenty-four goblins: three squads of eight goblins each. Each squad focuses on a single interloper, trying to surround and flank the hapless fool. The western section of the chamber is only 2-3 feet high due to a prominent overhang. After their rage has worn off, the goblins retreat to this area and fire arrows at any intruders still in the room.

Creatures (EL 6 per squad): Each goblin carries a small wooden shield, short sword, shortbow, and 10 arrows.

Goblin Barbarians (3 squads of 8 goblins, 24 total): hp 7 (9) each. The number given in parentheses indicates the goblins' hit points when raging.

Treasure: These goblins are wealthier than the goblins west of the chasm; each carries 2d6 gp. (If the PCs collect all of the coins, assume the goblins have 168 gp total.) One goblin (chosen randomly) also carries a "pretty stick" painted with fiery red symbols: a *wand of burning hands* (3rd-level caster) with 50 charges. The wand's command word is "Snarglefargle."

After the Quake:
The ceiling drops, creating a horizontal crevice 2-3 feet high. The PCs must crawl underneath to reach the north tunnel leading to the chasm.

11. Midden Pit.

This 20-foot-high cavern reeks of rotting meat and worse. Flickering firelight reveals a pair of goblins busily skinning a dead goat. Flies buzz around a pile of raw meat and swarm near an alcove containing a small pit where the goblins are tossing their refuse.

The Broken Skulls originally used this room as a sort of jail, keeping prisoners in the pit (which is described below in more detail). A few months ago, however, a carrion crawler wandered up from the chasm, and the goblins managed to trap it in the pit. Though Skrok wanted to kill it, Skizzle convinced him that it could make a useful ally. (In reality, Skizzle is hoping to find some way to use it against the war chief.)

Despite the grate the goblins placed over the pit, the carrion crawler can occasionally escape and wreak havoc. Skizzle has advised keeping it fed with scraps from the goblins' meals, which is why the goblins now use this room as an abattoir.

After dealing with the goblins, the PCs might wish to examine the pit. Read or paraphrase the following:

A crude wooden grate weighed down with large stones covers the pit. From the darkness inside the pit wafts a horrible stench accompanied by a soft, intermittent crackling noise interspersed with the occasional clatter.

The "pit" is actually part of a larger cavern situated below this one. The carrion crawler (see **Creatures** below) notices when someone approaches the pit and moves forward to attack. If a PC remains at the edge of the pit for more than 1 round, the carrion crawler thrusts its tentacles through the wooden grate, trying to reach its victim. The adventurers can easily avoid the beast by simply staying more than 2 feet away from the pit, but if they attack it, it retreats to the depths of the cave as soon as it suffers any damage.

Lifting the wooden grate requires a successful Strength check (DC 22, 20 if the stones are removed first). PCs can help each other lift the grate, as described under the Aid Another rule in the *Player's Handbook* (page 135).

Creatures (EL 2 for goblins, EL 4 for carrion crawler): The two goblins respond to the presence of intruders as other Broken Skulls do: a raging attack. They carry small wooden shields, short swords, shortbows, and 10 arrows apiece. They carry no treasure.

Goblin Barbarians (2): hp 8 (10), 4 (6). The numbers given in parentheses indicate the goblins' hit points when raging.

Carrion Crawler (1): CR 4; Large Aberration (9 ft. long); HD 3d8+6; hp 23; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 17

N
One Square = 5 Feet
10' Chimney
5' Chimney
15' Chimney
Horizontal Crevice (2'-3' High)
Horizontal Crevice (2'-3' High)
10' Chimney
10' Chimney
30' Chimney
Deep Fissure
Crevice (2'-3' wide)
Chimney
Bridge
Large Rock
Goblin Caverns: Map 2

(-1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural); Atk +4 melee (paralysis, 8 tentacles), -1 melee (1d4+1, bite); Face 5 ft. × 10 ft.; SA paralysis; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +5; Ability scores Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 15, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +10, Listen +6, Spot +6. *Feat:* Alertness.

SA–Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by the carrion crawler's tentacle attack must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 13) or be paralyzed for 2d6 minutes.

SQ–Scent (Ex): The carrion crawler can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet.

After the Quake:

The alcove containing the wooden grate collapses, opening up the cavern beneath. Assuming the PCs haven't killed it, the carrion crawler is freed by the earthquake and begins wandering the eastern caverns, feasting on carrion.

12. Prison.

The floor of this cavern is flat and sits about 3 feet below the floor of the tunnel. In the center of the cavern, an iron spike has been driven into the ground. Four 5-foot-long lengths of chain radiate out from it, ending in unpleasant iron collars. The cave smells of filth, and there are no other exits.

The tunnel leading to this room (from area 11) is narrow and requires an Escape Artist check to squeeze through (as detailed in the "Tunnels & Crevices" section).

Here the goblins keep their prisoners, although none are present now. Skrok has little use for hostages, and those he takes do not stay chained to the spike long before they perish in the main hall as entertainment or are fed to the carrion crawler in area 11.

If the PCs are ever captured by the Broken Skulls, this is where the goblins imprison them. There are four collars in all—extra prisoners face their fates immediately. Any equipment they might be carrying is taken to area 16. PCs chained to the stake cannot quite reach the walls of the chamber, though they can probably reach the 9-foot-high ceiling.

Pulling the iron stake out of the stone floor requires a successful Strength check (DC 23). Breaking a chain is DC 20, and removing a collar is DC 23. Forcibly removing a collar deals 1d4 points of subdual damage to the trapped PC.

Prison Chain and Collar: 2-inch-thick chain; Hardness 10; hp 15; Break DC 20.

Searching this room turns up little of interest and nothing of value. Anything that might have resale value has already been confiscated by Skrok.

After the Quake:

The earthquake opens up a crack in the north wall, forming a narrow crevice that leads to the chasm (area 7).

13. Sentry Post B. In this 10-foot-high cave, four of Skrok's mightiest goblins enjoy a game (tossing pebbles at the eye sockets of a skull) while standing guard.

When the PCs enter here, the sentries follow the standard tactic of raging. This automatically alerts Murkko in area 15 and an additional 1d6+2 goblins from area 14, who arrive in 3 rounds.

Before the tremor, just inside the tunnel leading to area 14, the din of the goblins in the main hall can be heard by any PC making a successful Listen skill check (DC 10).

Creatures (EL 5): These four goblin barbarians do not carry shields. Instead, they wield greataxes and carry shortbows (12 arrows each).

Goblin Sentries, Bbn2 (4): CR 2; Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 2d12; hp 12 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 small shield), 14 (when raging); Atk +2 melee (1d8/crit ×3, small greataxe), +3 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ rage 1/day (see below), uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +1*, Intimidate +2, Jump +0*, Listen +6 (includes Alertness feat), Move Silently +3* (includes +4 racial bonus), Spot +2 (includes Alertness feat), Swim +1*, Wilderness Lore +2. *Feat:* Alertness. *Note:* Skills marked with an asterisk include the -1 armor check penalty for wearing studded leather armor and carrying a small wooden shield.

SQ–Rage (Ex): When raging, the goblins are +4 hp, AC 14, Atk +4 melee (1d8+2/crit ×3, small greataxe); SV Fort +5, Will +2; Str 14, Con 15. Skills: Climb +5, Jump +4.

Treasure: Each sentry carries 2d6 gp and a pouch of three 50-gp gems (nine gems worth 450 gp total). If the PCs loot all of the goblins, assume that they score a total of 28 gp in coins.

After the Quake:

After the earthquake, this cave becomes a gathering place for survivors. Each time the PCs pass through this area, roll twice on the Random Encounter table, ignoring results higher than 10.

14. Main Hall.

Painted, howling goblins fill this mammoth, 20-foot-high cave. The floor consists of several tiers and natural shelves, some rising within 5 feet of the ceiling. Roughly 50 feet across the chamber, atop a jumble of jagged stones, stands a huge goblin painted in vivid red loops and swirls. Above his head he waves a glowing longsword, and at his sides stand two goblins painted in equally barbaric designs. The entire assembly seems worked up in savage frenzy, as though they will tear the cavern apart at any moment.

This cavern is where the Broken Skulls gather to hear the commands of their war chief, Skrok. Currently, informed by Murkko that most of the human settlers are preparing to evacuate, Skrok is bracing his legions for one last sweeping assault to destroy every last one of the humans.

Unless the PCs have been fantastically loud in approaching this area, the goblins have not yet heard their approach. As soon as the PCs arrive, though, the goblins have a chance to spot them. If the PCs do not approach stealthily, the goblins spot them immediately. If the PCs try to remain hidden, roll a Spot check for Skrok, Grekt, Kusk, and Skizzle (if present) opposed by the PCs' Hide skill checks. Also make a single Spot check for the horde of goblins, with a +5 bonus to the roll for the sheer number that are present.

Creatures (EL 6 per squad, EL 8 for Skrok and his cronies): In addition to the "named" goblins and Skizzle's bat familiar, this cave holds twenty-four goblin barbarians equipped with small wooden shields, short swords, and shortbows (10 arrows each).

Each squad of eight goblins is treated as an EL 6 encounter. Skrok and his cronies (excluding Skizzle and his bat familiar) represent an EL 8 encounter by themselves.

Goblin Barbarians (3 squads of 8 goblins, 24 total): hp 9 (11) each. The number given in parentheses indicates the goblins' hit points when raging.

Skrok, Male Goblin Bbn5: CR 5; Small Humanoid (3 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 5d12+5; hp 41; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 17 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +4 chain shirt, +1 small wooden shield); Atk +8 melee (1d8+3/crit 19-20, *+2 longsword*), +6 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ rage 2/day (see below), uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, cannot be flanked); AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +7, Intimidate +6, Listen +6, Spot +2, Swim +6, Wilderness Lore +4. *Feats:* Cleave, Power Attack.

SQ–Rage (Ex): When raging, Skrok is +10 hp; AC 15; Atk +10 melee (1d8+5/crit 19-20, *+2 longsword*); SV Fort +7, Will +3; Str 17, Con 16.

Possessions: Chain shirt; small wooden shield; Valor *(+2 longsword); potion of bull's strength;* dagger; shortbow with 15 arrows; pouch containing the iron key to the coffer in area **16**, 90 gp, and two gems worth 500 gp each.

Skrok is only the latest of a series of goblins to seize control of the Broken Skulls, but he is the first in several decades to actively wage war against the human villagers in the area. He is largely motivated to this course of action by greed and a certain amount of peer pressure. Skrok believes that Murkko and Skizzle won't respect him if he doesn't keep attacking the humans. Worse, he has seen Skizzle speaking privately with Kusk and thinks that if he shows any weakness, the shaman will support Kusk in a bid to seize control of the tribe.

Grekt, Female Goblin Bbn3: CR 3; Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 3d12; hp 24; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+1 size, +2 leather armor, +1 small wooden shield); Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/crit ×3, handaxe), +3 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ rage 1/day, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +6*, Intimidate +3, Jump +5*, Listen +5, Wilderness Lore +4. *Feats:* Cleave, Power Attack. Note: Grekt's Climb and Jump skills include the -1 armor check penalty for carrying a small wooden shield.

SQ–Rage (Ex): When raging, Grekt is +6 hp; AC 12; Atk +6 melee (1d6+3/crit ×3, handaxe); SV Fort +5, Will +3; Str 17, Con 14.

Possessions: Leather armor, small wooden shield, handaxe, shortbow with 10 arrows, *potion of bull's strength,* pouch with 30 gp and 75 sp, tarnished silver ring worth 15 gp.

Grekt is Skrok's crony and sometimes mate. She endeavors to be every bit as vicious as Kusk, knowing that when Skrok is gone, Kusk will make a move to seize control of the tribe. She would prefer that she were the next leader of the Broken Skulls.

Kusk, Male Goblin Bbn3: CR 3; Small Humanoid (3 ft. tall); HD 3d12; hp 25; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+1 size, +3 studded leather armor); Atk +3 melee (1d6/crit 19-20, short sword), +4 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ rage 1/day, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +3*, Intimidate +3, Intuit Direction +4, Listen +4, Wilderness Lore +3. *Feats:* Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot. *Note:* Kusk's Climb skill includes the -1 armor check penalty for wearing studded leather armor.

SQ–Rage (Ex): When raging, Kusk is +6 hp; AC 12; Atk +6 melee (1d6+2/crit 19-20, short sword); SV Fort +5, Will +3; Str 17, Con 14.

Possessions: Studded leather armor, *potion of entropic shield, potion of aid,* short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows, pouch containing four gems worth 100 gp each.

Kusk is one of Skrok's lieutenants only because he is popular with the Broken Skulls, and the war chief hasn't been able to kill him without endangering himself. Though lately Skrok has been denying Kusk a share of the *potions of bull's strength* that Skizzle makes, Kusk has a bargain with the adept for *potions of entropic shield* and *aid.* He uses these if forced into a confrontation with the war chief.

Flappy (Skizzle's Bat Familiar): CR 0; Diminutive Animal (1-ft. wingspan); HD 4; hp 8; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 18 (+4 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural); Atk none; Face 1 ft. × 1 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Blindsight; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 4.

Skills: Listen +9, Move Silently +4, Spot +9.

SQ–Blindsight (Ex): The bat sees by emitting high-frequency sounds that allows it to locate objects and creatures within 120 feet. A *silence* spell negates this and forces the bat to rely on its poor vision, which has a range of 10 feet.

Tactics: Once the goblins notice the PCs, they fly into a rage and charge into combat, howling with fury. The bulk of the goblins attack in a solid mass. Where possible, they try to flank and gang up on the PCs. Goblins who are unable to reach foes clamber onto higher ground and take cover behind some rocks (receiving a +1 bonus to melee attacks, a +2 cover bonus to AC, and a +1 cover bonus to Reflex saving throws), firing their bows. Skrok, Grekt, and Kusk each use their first full action to imbibe their potion of choice.

Skrok and Grekt both paint themselves with *potions of bull's strength* and begin wading toward the PCs. Meanwhile, Kusk drinks a *potion of entropic shield* and finds a vantage point where he can fire arrows into the melee and reap the benefits of one-quarter cover (see above). When he runs out of arrows, he takes a round to make a quick foray to the ground, picking up any loose arrows he can find (roll 1d6 to determine the number of arrows), then returns to his vantage point a round later.

If Skizzle is present, he stays out of combat and casts spells defensively. He does not waste spells on Skrok or the other goblins, helping them in no way. For the most part, Skizzle's bat familiar clings to the ceiling and avoids combat. If Skizzle is threatened, he uses the familiar to touch his foe with an *inflict moderate wounds* spell, hopefully gaining surprise as well as a flanking bonus.

Development: After the PCs have dealt with the goblins (or themselves been dealt with), read or paraphrase the following:

> A loud groan rumbles through the cavern. Dust suddenly trickles down from the ceiling high above. Simultaneously, rocks and loose pieces of equipment on the cavern floor begin to jiggle then dance. A stalactite suddenly plunges to the floor a few yards away. The floor itself tilts, first one way, then the next.

Just when the PCs are in the deepest reaches of the complex, an earthquake tears through the area, collapsing many of the tunnels, opening new ones, and generally rearranging the

caverns. Getting back out of the caves now requires that the PCs find an alternate route.

Because the cavern is only shaking—not collapsing—it is actually a fairly safe place to be during the quake. Characters (and goblins) in this cavern take 3d6 damage and are pinned unless they successfully make a Reflex saving throw. The DC for this save varies depending on where the PCs are exactly:

- DC 15 on the floor of the Main Hall;
- DC 18 atop any of the rock platforms;
- DC 20 in the tunnels outside the main hall;
- DC 25 if the PCs are on the walls (climbing, for example).

If a character is on the ceiling (while under the effects of a *spider climb* spell or potion), the DC is 15. (You should make checks for any goblins the PCs might have captured but not killed. Anyone bound hand and foot suffers a -10 penalty on the Reflex saving throw, while someone with only her hands restrained suffers a -5 penalty.)

After the Quake:

After the quake, the entire chamber is temporarily choked with dust. Each occupant must attempt a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer 1d6 points of subdual damage. (Again, you should make saves for any goblins still alive.) The dust is worse in the tunnels, requiring a save of DC 20. PCs on the topmost sections of the rock platforms (or higher) do not suffer any damage from the dust—it doesn't reach that high long enough to make breathing difficult.

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs once the quake and the dust subsides:

> Once everything stops shaking and the dust clears, the cavern is barely recognizable. Slabs of rock lean heavily against one another, and the floor is littered with rubble. Long, narrow cracks appear on the floor, the walls, and the ceiling. Distant rumbles and intermittent crashes suggest that this was not the only part of the caverns hit by the tremor.

The PCs must dig themselves out of the rubble, then find their way back out of the cavern complex. At the moment, the party is not being particularly threatened by the Broken Skulls; those that might still be in the Main Hall are too stunned and panicked to do anything but search frantically for a way out.

PCs pinned by the cave-in can free themselves with a successful Strength check (DC 25). Otherwise, another character can dig pinned characters out, removing one-tenth her drag rating in rocks every round—twice that if using actual digging tools. Assume that PCs who failed their Reflex save are pinned under 1d20 × 10 pounds of rubble.

15. Chief's Cave.

> The bits of gear and personal items scattered around suggest that this cave belongs to someone special—perhaps the goblin war chief. Flickering light from a single torch sends shadows dancing along the walls. The chamber stinks of animals, but the only sounds are the snap and crack of the flame.

This cave is the living space of Skrok, the war chief. Currently it is occupied by Skrok's guest, Murkko, a half-orc ranger who carries out spying missions for the Broken Skulls. It was he who learned of the magic sword buried with the ancient hero Angrull and suggested that Skrok should unearth it and use it against the humans.

Creature (EL 5): Murkko has been in here sleeping off a binge with Skrok but was alerted to the presence of intruders by the sounds of combat (from either area **13**, **14** or **16**). Guessing that something is amiss, he has extinguished all of the torches save Skrok's *everburning torch*, placed the **Trap**, climbed up to a small ledge directly above the torch, and crouched in the shadows. To remain unseen, Murkko must succeed at a Hide skill check opposed by the PCs' Spot skill checks.

Quiet and well-hidden PCs might catch Murkko unprepared, though he can still attempt a Listen skill check when they enter, opposed by the PCs' Move Silently skill checks.

Murkko, Male Half-orc Rgr5: CR 5; Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 5d10+10; hp 40; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 leather armor); Atk +9 melee (1d8+3/crit ×3, masterwork battleaxe) or +7/+7 melee (1d8+3/crit ×3, masterwork battleaxe plus 1d6+3/crit ×3, handaxe), +6 ranged (special, net); SA fight with two weapons; SQ favored enemies; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +4, Intuit Direction +4, Knowledge (nature) +1, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Profession (hunter) +4, Use Rope +3, Spot +2, Wilderness Lore +3. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net), Track (bonus feat).

SA—Fight with Two Weapons (Ex): When wearing no armor or light armor, Murkko can fight with two weapons as if he had the Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting feats.

SQ—Favored Enemies (Ex): Murkko's favored enemies are elves and humans. He gains a +2 bonus to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Wilderness Lore checks when using these skills against elves and a +1 bonus when using these skills against humans. He also gets a similar bonus to damage rolls; this damage bonus applies to melee attacks as well as ranged attacks within 30 feet.

Possessions: Leather armor, masterwork battleaxe, handaxe, net, caltrops (×2), explorer's outfit, backpack, 50-ft. rope, waterskin, vial of acid, *potion of bull's strength,* smokestick (×4), tindertwig (×10), pouch containing 65 gp and 15 sp, furs worth 5 gp (×2), 4 gp (×3), 3 gp (×3), and 2 gp (×2).

Murkko is fascinated with nature's cruelty. Raised among orcs, Murkko learned to despise humans and elves. Ordinarily, though, Murkko swallows his distaste and mingles with humans in their villages, spying out likely targets for the Broken Skull goblins to attack. However, whenever he gets the chance, Murkko explores his predatory tendencies by hunting humans and elves traveling through the forest.

Tactics: If someone other than a goblin enters the cave, Murkko hurls his net over the weakest looking one, then threatens to pour acid on the helpless PC unless the party allows him to leave in peace. He is not prepared to fight a full-scale battle with invaders—especially if they have already dispatched everything between here and the cave. (Of course, if the PCs appear badly wounded, Murkko might be tempted.) If they leave him no choice, he calls his animal companions from area **16** to defend him and rains arrows on the party until the PCs either withdraw or kill him. The animal companions arrive the round after they are summoned and fight until slain or until called off by the half-orc ranger.

If the adventurers decide to let Murkko depart, he only takes what belongs to him—though if possible, he'll come back later to see if they missed anything he can use.

Trap (EL 1/4): Murkko has also made use of his caltrops by dropping them on the floor below the torch. If the PCs don't spot them (by making a successful Spot skill check against DC 15), anyone approaching the wall (either to fight or to climb the wall) might suffer damage. Make an attack roll for the caltrops, against which the PC does not receive a shield, armor, or deflection bonus. (Shoes allow a +2 bonus.) If the attack "hits," the character takes 1 point of damage, halving her Speed until the wound is healed or one day has passed. Being hit by a caltrop in this fashion immediately halts running or charging PCs.

Caltrop Trap: CR 1/4; +5 melee (caltrop deals 1 point of damage and reduces speed by half); Search (DC 15); Disable Device (automatically succeeds).

Treasure: Once the PCs have dealt with Murkko, they can search the cave. Most of Skrok's belongings are scattered around the room. A successful Search check (DC 15) reveals a few small treasures among the junk: a gold platter (50 gp), a jeweled dagger (125 gp), a carved drinking horn (10 gp), and a few stray coins (18 sp). A higher Search check roll (DC 25) uncovers Skrok's secret stash of useful items, hidden beneath the false top of a hollowed-out stalagmite: a spare *potion of bull's strength,* a vial of holy water, and a bag of 10 silver arrowheads (1 gp each).

The single lit torch is, in fact, an *everburning torch* Skrok took from a defeated wizard. Anyone specifically searching near the *torch* notices that it produces no heat.

After the Quake:

If the PCs come to this room after the earthquake, little has changed from the description above. Murkko is still here, waiting for confirmation of Skrok's demise before claiming the war chief's treasures and leaving the rest of the Broken Skulls to their fates. If he is allowed to loot the war chief's cave, he takes a few additional items with him when he begins searching for a way out. In this case, he will have the extra *potion of bull's strength,* the silver arrowheads, and the jeweled dagger.

16. Trophy Room.

This chamber is long and narrow, and the walls are lined with objects that might have once been someone's greatest treasures—but that are now so much junk in a goblin war chief's collection. Rusted weapons, dented armor, and broken shields lie or hang about, surrounded with scraps of moldering cloth, tarnished plates, broken goblets, bones, skulls, and dust.

If the PCs have not yet visited area 14 and dealt with the goblins there, they hear the goblins' ruckus on a successful Listen skill check (DC 10).

This narrow cave is full of trophies the Broken Skulls have looted over the past few years. Much of it is junk—broken axe handles, dented helmets, tattered banners, and the skulls of defeated foes. Here and there among the junk are worthwhile items: a serviceable large, steel shield; a breastplate in need of new straps; a notched dwarven urgrosh; a bloodstained nobleman's cloak; a quiver of four arrows; and an empty scroll case. Hidden behind a large boulder is the real **Treasure.**

Huddled together at the north end of the cavern, hidden by the uneven floor and stalagmites, are Murkko's three animal companions: a trio of wolverines. See **Creatures** below.

Creatures (EL 5): Murrko's wolverines savagely attack anyone other than the half-orc ranger and goblins. PCs with the Animal Empathy skill can affect a wolverine's attitude with a successful skill check. See Table 5-4 on page 149 of the *DMG;* treat the wolverines as "Unfriendly" until they attack, at which point treat them as "Hostile."

Wolverines (3): CR 2; Medium-Size Animal (4 ft. long); HD 3d8+12; hp 29, 25, 20; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d4+2/1d4+2, claws), -1 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA rage; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +15, Listen +7, Spot +7.

SA—Rage (Ex): A wolverine that takes any damage in combat flies into a berserk rage the following round. An enraged wolverine gains +4 Strength, +4 Constitution, and -2 AC. The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily.

SQ—Scent (Ex): Wolverines can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet.

Treasure: The true treasure in here lies behind a large rock, which requires a successful Strength check (DC 24) to move aside. In a crevice behind the rock sits an iron coffer atop a wooden barrel. The coffer is locked, and Skrok carries the key.

Locked Iron Coffer: Hardness 10; hp 15; Break (DC 25); Open Locks (DC 20).

Inside the coffer are 80 gp, 130 sp, 200 cp, three gems worth 500 gp and 150 gp (×2) respectively, a *pearl of power* (3rd), and a vial of *oil of slipperiness.* If the PCs break open the coffer, the vial shatters, and the treasure inside is coated with the *oil.* Any activity that requires handling the contents of the coffer takes five times as long as normal, as objects squirt out of the PCs' hands. The *oil of slipperiness* wears off in 8 hours.

A secondary treasure here—one which has never occurred to Skrok or even Skizzle—is the barrel. Inside are 50 pounds of granulated salt, worth about 250 gp in any market.

After the Quake:

Though many of the goblins' treasures have fallen to the floor in a loud clatter, the chamber itself is relatively undamaged.

Concluding the Adventure

When the PCs return to the villagers with news that the Broken Skull goblins have been defeated, the villagers hold a feast in honor of the heroes. Within a few days, life in the village and the outlying farms returns to normal.

The PCs might wish to return to the goblin caves, now that they know the new way in. There might be a few goblins left, and there could be treasures the PCs missed on the first visit.

In addition, you might wish to develop levels of the caves that, with the earthquake, are now accessible—perhaps from the chasm. Though such areas would most likely not have any goblins, other subterranean creatures might lurk in the depths and occasionally emerge through the newly opened passages to menace the surface world.

To get a better idea of what the barbarian's rage ability feels like, JD Wiker drove in Seattle traffic during rush hour.

Encounter Level Chart on Next Page

Encounter Level Chart

Summarized below are the ELs for all of the encounters in the adventure "Depths of Rage":

Area	Encounter Description	EL
1	2 Goblins, Bbn1	2
2	16 Mountain Goats	4
3	12 Goblins, Bbn1	8
5	12 Goblins, Bbn1	8
6	Skizzle, Male Goblin Adp4	3
8	9 Goblins, Bbn1	6
9	6 Goblins, Bbn1	4
10	Squad #1: 8 Goblins, Bbn1	6
	Squad #2: 8 Goblins, Bbn1	6
	Squad #3: 8 Goblins, Bbn1	6
11	2 Goblins, Bbn1	2
	1 Carrion Crawler	4
13	4 Goblins, Bbn2	5
14	Squad #1: 8 Goblins, Bbn1	6
	Squad #2: 8 Goblins, Bbn1	6
	Squad #3: 8 Goblins, Bbn1	6
	Skrok, Male Goblin Bbn5	8
	Grekt, Female Goblin Bbn3	
	Kusk, Male Goblin Bbn3	
	Flappy, Skizzle's Bat Familiar	
15	Murkko, Half-orc Rgr5	5
	Caltrop Trap	1/4
16	3 Wolverines	5

Alterations (continued from page 94)

Encounter Level Chart

Summarized below are the ELs for all of the encounters in the adventure "Alterations":

Area	Encounter Description	EL
1	2 Male Human Zombies	1
2	1 Male Human Zombie	1/2
3	3 Dire Rats	1
4	Collapsing Staircase Trap	1/2
5	4 Dog Skeletons	1
7	6 Dire Rats	2
11	Sheeah Z, Female Human Rog1	1
13	5 Male Human Zombies	3
*	1 Millexium Mouther	4
**	4 Orc Bikers	2
**	3 Wererats, Human Com1	4
**	2 Patrol Officers, Human War2	2
**	1 Carrion Crawler	4
**	3 Dire Rats	1

* The millexium mouther can be encountered anywhere in the underground laboratory (areas 17-27).

** See the "Crossroads Random Encounters" sidebar.

Encounter Level Chart

Summarized below are the ELs for all of the encounters in the adventure "Deep Freeze":

RAKER ASYLUM FOR THE MAD

Area	Encounter Description	EL
7	Pym, Female Human War3	2

IN THE MOUNTAINS

Area	Encounter Description	EL
–	Crossing the Glacier	2
–	1 Ice Mephit	3

FROZEN CITY OF THE FARANTH

Area	Encounter Description	EL
4	2 Vargouilles	3
6	5 Inmates, Human Com1	2
11	9 Inmates, Human Com1	4
	Hubert, Male Human Com3	
	Shaver, Male Human Com2	
	Dr. Asworth, Male Human Exp5	+2
	Faranth	+1

Deep Freeze (continued from page 29)

Given the adventure's greater emphasis on investigation and roleplaying, you can award a flat story award instead of XPs for individual encounters. If the PCs eliminated the threat of the Faranth and rescued the enthralled humans, they should be granted a story award of 6,000 XP. Outstanding roleplaying and puzzle solving should also be rewarded with individual XP bonuses. If the PCs harmed or allowed to be harmed any of the inmates save Pym, their XP rewards should be reduced.

The enigma of the Faranth leaves many mysteries unsolved. Will the authorities and scholars in the outside world believe that such a menace sleeps under the mountains? Is this city the only one of its kind? What prevents more of the creatures from thawing out and awakening from their eons-old slumber? These are questions you'll have to answer within the context of your own campaign, but the answers could provide material for many adventures to come.

Cameron has enjoyed roleplaying games for more than ten years, and this is his second publication in DUNGEON Magazine. *(His first adventure, "The Murder of Maury Miller," appeared in Issue #57.) Cameron divides his time between roleplaying games and writing music, samples of which can be found at www.mp3.com/clockwork_v01.*

PELISSO STREET
SWAMPERS

Alterations

One Stop at the Monster Shop

by Philip Athans

artwork by Marc Sasso, cartography by Craig Zipse

"Alterations" is a D&D adventure set in the post-industrial fantasy world of GREYHAWK: 2000 published in DRAGON *Magazine #277. The adventure is designed for four characters of 1st-level. Use the "Adapting the Adventure" sidebar to adjust the encounters for characters of higher level and to modify the adventure for more traditional D&D campaign settings.*

Adventure Summary

The characters are hired to pick up a mysterious package in a particularly run-down section of the New City of Greyhawk known as Crossroads. Below an abandoned bridal shop, they discover a secret laboratory and the remains of a scientist named Gerhardt Kurmi, recently transformed into a millexium mouther (a genetically altered variant of the horrific gibbering mouther) by his partner, a modern-day necromancer named Fergus Tain. The PCs must capture or destroy the millexium mouther and escape Crossroads with their lives.

Adventure Background

Gerhardt Kurmi and Fergus Tain were partners, both successful in their chosen professions, who initiated an expensive and time-consuming project to create a new lifeform specifically designed to "sniff out" the rare element millexium. Kurmi and Tain took their controversial idea to a number of private funding sources before finally being given a grant from the Eighteen of Blackstone, a cabal of wealthy industrialists who fund shadowy projects like this one in hopes of securing valuable new patents.

The Eighteen provided funding for Kurmi and Tain to establish a secret laboratory in the slums of Greyhawk's Undercity. One of the Eighteen is a notorious slumlord and offered the use of a rundown, vacant building under which the laboratory was set up. Another had connections with a violent gang of street toughs. They were hired to provide security, having been offered ownership of the building as a gang hideout.

What the Eighteen doesn't know is that Kurmi and Tain, though hardworking and dedicated associates, never really liked each other. Kurmi was unhappy with the gang hired to protect them and was beginning to see the researchers as targets for extortion. Tain insisted the gang be kept around, and over the course of a few weeks he killed all of them and *animated* their bodies into the zombies that now protect the laboratory with complete loyalty. Kurmi might not have liked the gang, but he liked undead even less. Arguments raged between the two constantly, and eventually Kurmi tried to murder his partner. Tain, an accomplished necromancer, proved harder to kill that Kurmi bargained for. Kurmi soon found himself trapped in a fate worse than death.

Tain removed Kurmi's brain and implanted it into the body of the amoebic millexium mouther. Kurmi, as one might expect, quickly went mad, turning on Tain almost immediately. This time, the necromancer was caught off guard and Kurmi, now the first and only millexium mouther on Oerth, managed to kill and eat him. That was two days ago, and Kurmi has been roaming the underground laboratory ever since, fading in and out of consciousness.

At the outset of the project, Kurmi and Tain established a strict timeline, assuring the Eighteen that they'd be able to deliver a living prototype of the millexium mouther on 5 Fireseek, 2000 C.Y. That day has come, and the PCs are hired by the Eighteen to go to the Undercity and pick up "the package."

The PCs are given no information except an address and demands for complete secrecy. They can come into this mission from any of a number of sources. One of the PCs might be an undercover cop from the Blackstone police, assigned to investigate the Eighteen. Another might have been secretly hired by a rival power group to steal the millexium mouther from the Eighteen. Others might just be in it for the money—a cool 5,000 gp each for picking up the package and transporting it to an address in the frontier town of Exit, avoiding United Counties of Urnst authorities along the way. The PCs will have no way of knowing how terribly wrong the whole thing has gone already.

Crossroads

Crossroads is not quite the worst neighborhood in the New City of Greyhawk (that distinction goes to Central Greyhawk), but it's pretty bad. The buildings that are still standing are predominantly squats. There are only a handful of legitimate businesses still open in Crossroads, mostly grocery stores and liquor stores patrolled by armed guards. A small orc community calls the central part of Crossroads their home, guarding their turf with racist zeal. Rival street gangs abound, and the sound of gunfire rings through the nights.

Most of the buildings are three- or four-story tenements with vacant storefronts on the first floor and apartments or offices on the floors above. The sewers here are home to the Crossratz, a gang of wererats. Oddly enough, the wererats feel it's a matter of honor to keep the plumbing in Crossroads in

Adapting the Adventure

"Alterations" is a GREYHAWK adventure. However, unlike most GREYHAWK adventures which are set in a medieval time period—specifically the year 591 C.Y.—this module is set in the year 2000 C.Y., during Greyhawk's "post-industrial" age. For more information on running D&D campaigns in non-medieval time periods, see the "Building a Different World" section in Chapter 6: World Building of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*.

This adventure was designed for use with the "Greyhawk 2000" campaign setting in *DRAGON Magazine* #277. The article provides instructions for creating characters in Post-Industrial Age Greyhawk, as well as information on the technology common to the era.

"Alterations" can be modified for traditional D&D campaigns simply by removing the modern-era technologies and replacing them with medieval counterparts. For instance, creatures armed with firearms might carry crossbows or low-powered magic wands instead. Handwritten journals or magically trapped tomes can be substituted for the computer in the lab. Gerhardt Kurmi would be a sorcerer or wizard instead of a geneticist.

This module was designed for four 1st-level PCs. However, modifying the adventure for higher-level parties is also a relatively simple matter:

2nd- to 3rd-level PCs: If the party contains fewer than four characters, the encounters should challenge the party as written. If the PCs are having too easy a time, add more zombies to the Pelisso Street Swampers gang. You can also assume that the Infidelz (a neighborhood gang of orc bikers) have learned about the secret laboratory and show up just as the PCs are preparing to leave. Maybe the Infidelz are working for a secret rival of the Eighteen—someone or something that wants Kurmi and Tain's research.

4th- to 6th-level PCs: In addition to the suggestions above, give the Infidelz class levels in fighter or rogue. You might also consider infecting the zombie street thugs with yellow mold, making them even more dangerous. In addition to increasing the millexium mouther's size, you can give it more control over its surroundings. For instance, maybe the secret lab has some automated defenses or invisible stalkers that Gerhardt Kurmi can control with his twisted intellect.

7th- to 9th-level PCs: In addition to the suggestions above, consider making the Pelisso Street Swampers flesh golems instead of zombies. Also give the millexium mouther additional powers, such as the abilities to cast *ethereal jaunt* at will and *regenerate* damage each round. There is also the possibility of Fergus Tain returning as some sort of undead creature, like a spectre or ghost.

good order. The residents of Crossroads drop coins, food, and other goodies into sewer grates as offerings of thanks.

The streets are littered with garbage and abandoned cars. Homeless people sleep wherever they feel comfortable, gangs prowl on foot, in cars, and on motorcycles, and the police demand cash up front before assisting any citizens, often taking bids from criminals and victims in the middle of the street.

Beginning the Adventure

Read or paraphrase the following when the players are ready to begin the adventure:

> The Eighteen (through an agent) has provided you with a Stoutarm Industries SI/2GX truck and the address 62341 Pelisso Street, at the corner of Pelisso and Redgate. You all recognize this address in Crossroads as the kind of place where you don't want to spend too much time. You've been offered 5,000 gp each to pick up some kind of package there and deliver it to 110 Vista Drive in Exit, avoiding any authorities along the way.
>
> When you get to the corner of Pelisso Street and Redgate Avenue, you see a crumbling three-story tenement building that looks no more lived in than its dark neighbors. An unlit neon sign reading "Cynthia's Bridal Shop" hangs above the bricked-up storefront. The north-south tracks of the elevated Kenendi-Cairn line follow Redgate Avenue, only 8 feet or so off the building's west wall, even with the third floor. A speeding train passes every couple minutes, the tired, beaten inhabitants inside never bothering to look out the window. No one really wants to know what's going on in Crossroads tonight, or any night ...

The players should specify where their characters park the truck. If they wait in the vehicle, blowing the horn occasionally or not, they'll have a long wait. The undead gang inside has no idea how to respond and Kurmi, deep underground, won't hear them. At some point, the PCs will probably get curious and investigate the building.

Cynthia's Bridal Shop

A cursory examination of the bridal shop doesn't reveal much, although a dwarf PC recognizes that the windows were bricked up within the past month. PCs searching the building perimeter for secret entrances can make a Search skill check (DC 15), with success revealing the newly constructed secret door on the north side of the building leading into the basement stairs. Elf PCs who come within 5 feet of the secret door are entitled to a Search check even if they aren't actively searching for it.

The back door is a dented, rusted steel affair that's firmly bolted from the inside. There are two front entrances: locked double doors leading into a bricked-up storefront and a single locked door leading to the apartments above. A rusted sign that used to have neon tubes but still reads "Cynthia's Bridal" hangs above the double doors.

The apartment door has six buzzers, marked 2A, 2B, 2C, 3A, 3B, and 3C. None of the buzzers work.

Locked Steel Doors: 1 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 30; Break DC 18; Open Lock (DC 21).

First Floor

1. Bridal Shop. If the PCs enter the shop, read or paraphrase the following:

> Once a pleasant little shop for brides-to-be, this large room is now a jumble of broken shop fixtures, exposed wiring, and at least a couple dozen mannequins, some still eerily dressed in the wedding fashions of 1920's Greyhawk. With the windows securely bricked up, the space is dark, but you can still see something moving, and was that a shuffling footstep?

Tain has posted two zombies here to scare away (or kill) the curious. They are described under **Creatures** below.

Any PC who makes a successful Spot skill check (DC 15) recognizes that the north wall of the bridal shop is newly hung drywall, painted to appear as old as the rest of the building. (Dwarf PCs receive a +4 bonus to the check.) A secret door replaces an old doorway, leading to the basement stairs. Finding the hidden door requires a successful Search skill check (DC 15), although elves who come within 5 feet are entitled to a skill check regardless of whether they are actively searching for secret doors.

Creatures (EL 1): All of the zombies encountered in this building are dressed in ragged clothing, with tattered leather jackets bearing the symbol of a flaming skull with diamond-shaped eye sockets. Above each skull, in stylized lettering, reads: "Pelisso Street Swampers." This was the gang hired by the Eighteen to guard the clandestine laboratory.

Pelisso Street Swampers, Male Human Zombies (2): CR 1/2; Medium-Size Undead (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 2d12+3 (includes Toughness feat); hp 16, 15; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (-1 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/crit 19-20, bowie knife; or 1d6+1, slam); SW undead, partial actions only; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 3.

Feat: Toughness.

Possessions: Leather jacket, bowie knife (treat as short sword), matchbook and smokes, 2d10 gp in pockets.

SQ—Undead: Zombies are immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

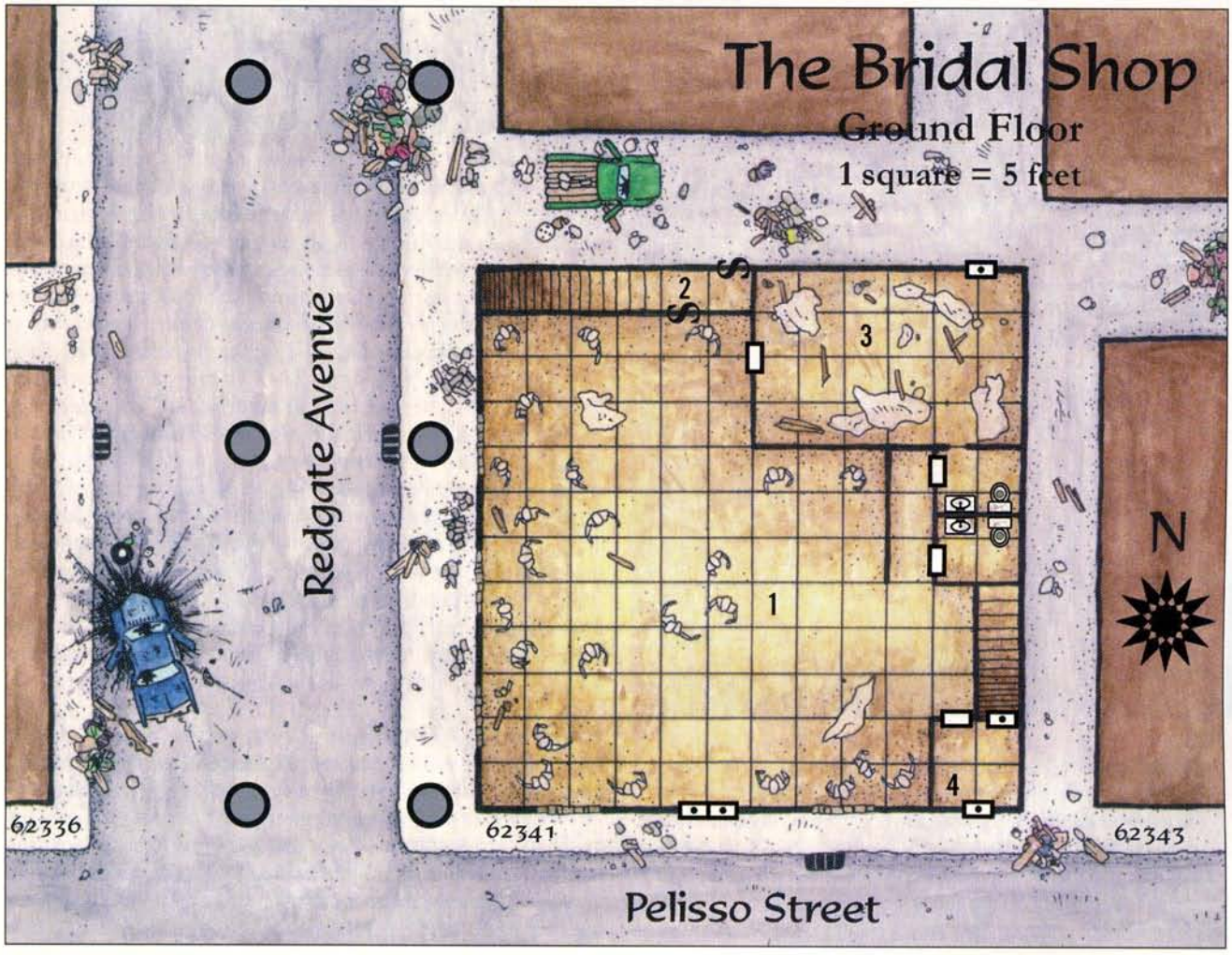
SQ—Partial Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only partial actions. Thus, they can move or attack, but not both in the same round.

Tactics: Fighting the zombies in the dark, with all the mannequins around, is not as easy as it might seem. The zombies carelessly nudge the mannequins as they pass, and the old floor shakes whenever someone takes a step or the train passes by, causing the mannequins to move. The zombies have one-half cover (+4 cover bonus to AC and a +2 cover bonus to Reflex saving throws), and there is a 20% chance that any successful ranged attack actually hits a mannequin instead (as if the zombie had concealment). There are twenty mannequins, which fall over or blast apart if they take more than 3 points of damage.

2. Basement Stairs. A successful Search skill check (DC 15) is required to find either secret door leading to this staircase.

Creature (EL 1/2): A single zombie stands guard at the top of the stairs.

Pelisso Street Swamper, Male Human Zombie (1): hp 13; see area 1 for complete statistics.



The New City of Greyhawk

The origins of this great city are lost to the misty recesses of ancient history, but people have been living in the city of Greyhawk for at least two thousand years. The New City of Greyhawk (or just Greyhawk, G.H., or the New City) is home to over ten million people and serves as the capital of the United Counties of Urnst.

The city is made up of wards and suburbs. Though most of the city's population are considered "middle class," there are large parts of the city, especially the "Undercity" that sprawls across the ground below the skyscraper homes of the aristocracy, where the standard of living is deplorable. Below ground lies a seemingly endless warren of tunnels and sewers inhabited by inhuman and supernatural denizens, from wererats and kobolds to giant spiders and carrion crawlers. The poorer neighborhoods occasionally see strange occurrences, and the less fortunate citizens fall prey to monsters, undead, and each other. Street gangs have become increasingly common over the past twenty years, as the disenfranchised grow more dependent on each other for their personal safety.

Most of the city's population lives in the surrounding suburbs like Steaming Springs and the slightly more affluent Blackstone. These are the skilled blue collar and white collar workers who keep the complex machinery of the New City running smoothly. Middle-class citizens of the New City enjoy a comfortable lifestyle and generally go on about their business, never seeing anything more unusual or exotic than the occasional visiting dwarf or handsome silvaan (elf).

The aristocracy control the money and thus everything in the New City of Greyhawk. Noble titles can be earned, inherited, or purchased from Duchess Tinillia. It's commonly assumed that there's no place better to be rich than the New City of Greyhawk, where money can buy, quite literally, anything. Wealthy aristocrats in the New City have access to high-tech medicine and magical healing that makes them virtually immortal and perpetually young. They spy on each other and their workers with everything from closed circuit video to *clairvoyance/clairaudience* potions (sometimes both at the same time) and enjoy the two most valuable things on Oerth: freedom and information.

Law in the New City of Greyhawk does its best in what has become an impossible situation. Because each ward has its own separate police department, the wealthy neighborhoods like Upper North Greyhawk or Diamond Lake are well patrolled and protected to the point where random violence, crimes of opportunity, burglary, and such like are basically nonexistent. On the other hand, the people of the Undercity are left to fend for themselves, with what police there might be specializing more in extortion and black market profiteering than "to serve and protect."

3. Stockroom. The stockroom is a jumble of fallen shelves and bolts of old, moth-eaten cloth (mostly dirty white).

Creatures (EL 1): Three dire rats are rooting around in here, looking for food. The rats have chewed a 2-foot-diameter hole through the wall leading from the adjacent ladies' room.

Dire Rats (3): CR 1/3; Small Animal (4 ft. long); HD 1d8+1; hp 8, 5, 3; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atk +3 melee (1d4, bite); SA disease; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Move Silently +6. *Feat:* Weapon Finesse (bite).

SA—Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude saving throw (DC 12), incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 temporary Dexterity and 1d3 temporary Constitution (see *DMG*, page 74).

SQ—Scent (Ex): Dire rats can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet.

4. Entry. The apartment entryway is a dark little space. On the north wall are six mailboxes, numbered as the buzzers outside. The stairs lead up into darkness and creak loudly when walked on; ascending the stairs quietly requires a successful Move Silently skill check (DC 20).

Trap (EL 1/2): The stairs collapse into a jumble of broken wood and rusty nails—causing 1d6 points of damage to anyone on them—if more than 500 pounds are on the stairs at any one time. PCs caught on the stairs when they collapse must make a successful Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to avoid the fall.

Collapsing Staircase: CR 1/2; 1d6 points of damage; Reflex save (DC 15) negates; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (n/a).

Second Floor

5. Hallway. As the PCs head upstairs to the second floor, read or paraphrase the following:

> A quiet, shuffling sound like windblown leaves or light footsteps echoes down the stairway.

Creatures (EL 1): If the PCs make no effort to silence their ascent or don't succeed in making it up the stairs quietly, the four dire rat skeletons in the upstairs hallway converge on the X and attack the PCs as they come up the stairs. Otherwise, the skeletons remain at the positions marked S and move to attack normally as the PCs make their presence known. The skeletons never leave the second floor.

Dire Rat Skeletons (4): CR 1/4; Small Undead (3 ft. long); HD 1/2d12; hp 4, 4, 3, 2; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural); Atk +0 melee (1d4, bite); SQ undead; AL N; Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Feat: Improved Initiative.

SQ—Undead: Skeletons are immune to cold-based attacks. They are not damaged by piercing weapons and take only half damage from slashing weapons. DIM weapons and dwarven firearms inflict one-quarter damage. They are immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual, ability damage, energy drain, and death from massive damage.

6. Apartment 2A. This apartment was vacated nearly 30 years ago. Even the modest kitchen appliances were stripped out, leaving pipes sticking out of the west wall of the main room. A dirty old mattress, some tattered blankets, and an old oil lantern (turned off now, but it still has enough oil to burn for half an hour) sit on the floor in the corner. The tiny bedroom is filled with empty beer cans.

7. Apartment 2B. The main room of this spacious apartment is scattered with broken bits of what was once a cheap dinette set. The bedroom door is hanging open. The kitchen of this apartment is still functional, but teaming with cockroaches.

Creatures (EL 2): A family of dire rats have made their home inside the bedroom. They attack all intruders.

Dire Rats (6): hp 9, 6, 5, 3, 3, 2; see area 3 for complete statistics.

8. Apartment 2C. A heavy stench of death and decay emanates from behind the door. In the main room rest five military-style cots. On three of the cots lay the mutilated bodies of a woman and two men, all of whom have been dead for at least a month. Tain never got around to *animating* them.

Treasure: Any PC who makes a successful Search skill check (DC 10) finds a blue, plastic pill dispenser in one corner of the apartment. Inside the small container are two white capsules; when swallowed, each capsule acts like a concentrated *potion of cure light wounds*.

Third Floor

9. Hallway. Laying on the floor at the top of the stairs from the second floor is a DIM pistol (described in the "Dimensional Weapons" sidebar). It has been drained of magic, and though fully loaded, it's completely useless. A moldy carpet stretches along this dark hall. Down the hall (at the point marked with an X) is the corpse of a Pelisso Street Swamper zombie. The body is crawling with maggots, and examining it closely requires a successful Constitution check (DC 11). The top of the corpse's head has been blown off.

10. Apartment 3A. Eight military-style cots dominate the main room of this apartment. This was where most of the Swampers slept before being turned into undead by Tain. All of the useful items and food have been raided by Sheeah Z (area 11).

The train can be heard going by every few minutes, even through the brick outer wall.

11. Apartment 3B. The door to this apartment has been nailed shut from the inside.

Nailed Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 15.

In the apartment lurks the sole survivor of the Pelisso Street Swampers: a nineteen-year-old girl named Sheeah Z. The main room has a small dinette table set up with three mismatched chairs. On the table rests a stack of boxes containing numerous dried and canned foods, household cleaners, old air fresheners, paper products, and the like. The kitchen, like the living room, is oddly clean. There is no electricity, but light comes from beyond the bedroom door.

The small bedroom contains an old mattress on the floor in one corner. Blankets and an assortment of men's and women's clothing are piled up on the mattress, and a small battery-operated lamp sits among a pile of loose batteries. A **Treasure** is hidden under the mattress.

Creature (EL 1): Sheeah Z hides in the walk-in closet, whispering prayers over and over again to Zibgleb, a god she invented in the fevered recesses of her terrified mind. Sheeah does not attack the PCs but tries to run from them. Calming her requires a successful Diplomacy skill check or Charisma check (DC 15), but if the PCs can manage it, Sheeah Z offers to trade them information if they'll help her escape the building.

Sheeah Z knows she's the last of the Pelisso Street Swampers and is even savvy enough to know that the rest of them were turned into zombies. The corpse in the hallway (area 9) is Ronnik, her boyfriend, whom she had to kill before blockading herself in the apartment. She knows that the Eighteen hired the Swampers to protect two men. She knows one of them only as "Dr. K" (a twitchy older man she thought was kind of funny) and Mr. Tain (the necromancer she refuses to talk about). She knows where the secret door to the basement stairs is located but has no clue what Dr. K and Mr. Tain were doing down there. She's never been in the basement and will not go there unless *charmed*. All she wants is an escort through the undead-ridden building so she can find her sister, who runs with the Skeetrz gang and will take care of her. If the PCs let down their guard, Sheeah Z tries to pick their pockets, even in her delicate frame of mind.

Sheeah Z, Female Human Rog1: CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 1d6-1; hp 5; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Atk -1 melee (1d3-1, switchblade); SA sneak attack +1d6; AL CN; SV Fort -1, Ref +7 (includes Lightning Reflexes feat), Will +0; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +4, Escape Artist +6, Hide +7, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Pick Pocket +7, Spot +3, Tumble +7. *Feats:* Dodge, Lightning Reflexes.

Possessions: Leather jacket, switchblade, three gold rings (stolen by her boyfriend; worth 100 gp each).

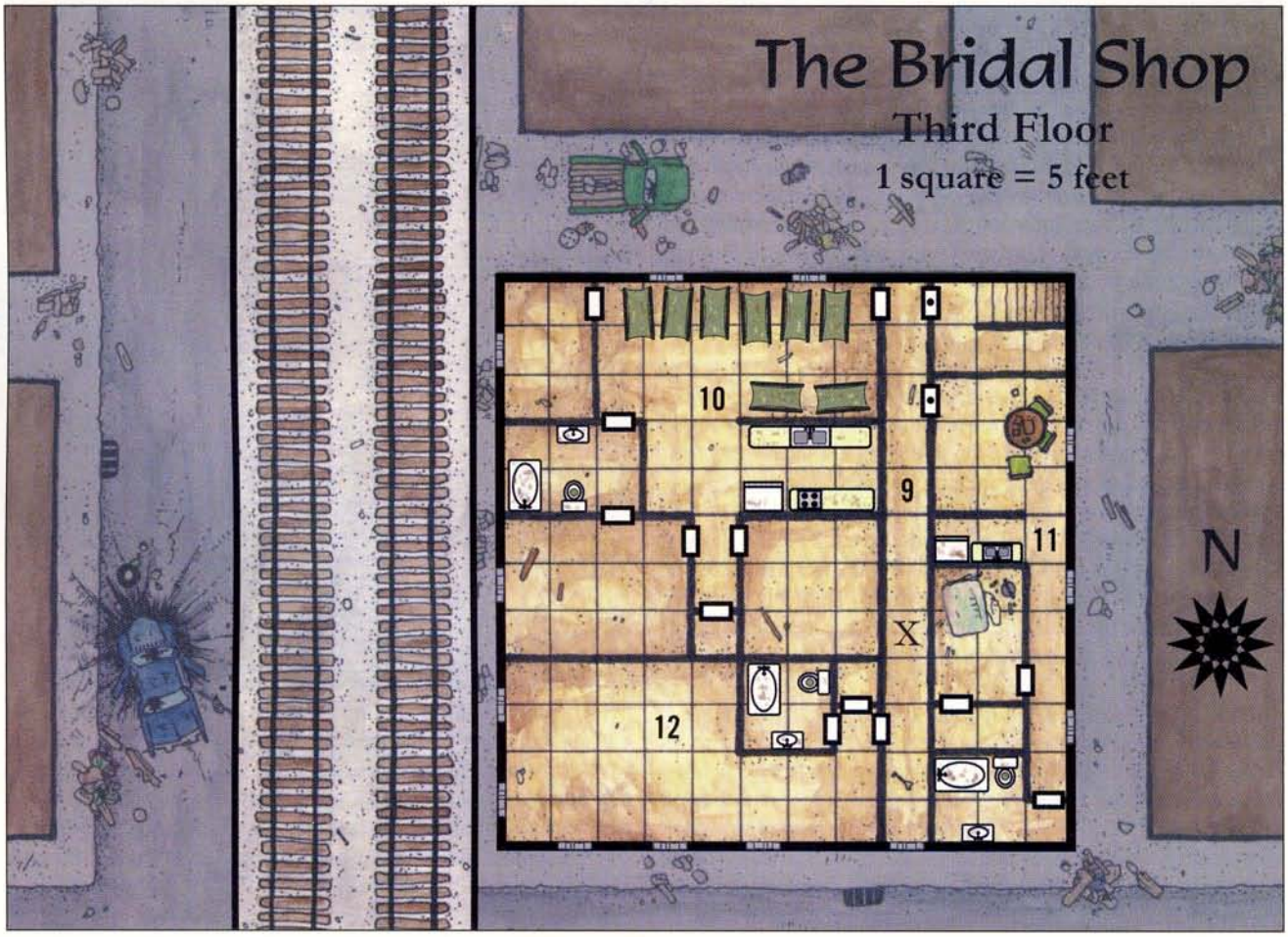
Treasure: Under the bedroom mattress is a functional DIM pistol with a full clip. Sheeah Z doesn't even know it's there.

12. Apartment 3C. This single-room studio was cleaned out a long time ago and contains nothing of interest. Even the appliances have been removed, leaving nothing but pipes jutting from the floor and walls. A few cockroaches scuttle about, and the train roars by every few minutes.

Basement

13. Generator Room. The stairs from the secret room on the first floor lead into total darkness below ground. PCs without darkvision will need a light source to see.

This room is occupied by the **Creatures**. A gas generator rests against the south wall. It works but is out of fuel. On the floor nearby lay seven rusty gas cans, two of which are full of gasoline—enough to power the generator for 3 hours. The cables running from the generator disappear into the floor, heading down to the underground lab. The generator also powers a single fluorescent tube mounted to the ceiling of this room.



The door in the northeast corner leading to the staircase is made of reinforced metal and locked. This door appears new.

Reinforced, Locked Metal Door: 1 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 35; Break DC 20; Open Lock (DC 22).

Creatures (EL 3): The room is inhabited by five zombies—former members of the Pelisso Street Swampers. They shuffle about aimlessly, attacking anyone who enters. Two of the zombies pack automatic pistols, which they fire once per round. Once they deplete their ammunition, the zombies drop the guns and engage in melee combat. Each gun has a metal cartridge holding 10 bullets. See the *DMG*, pages 162-164, for rules and statistics on modern-era weapons.

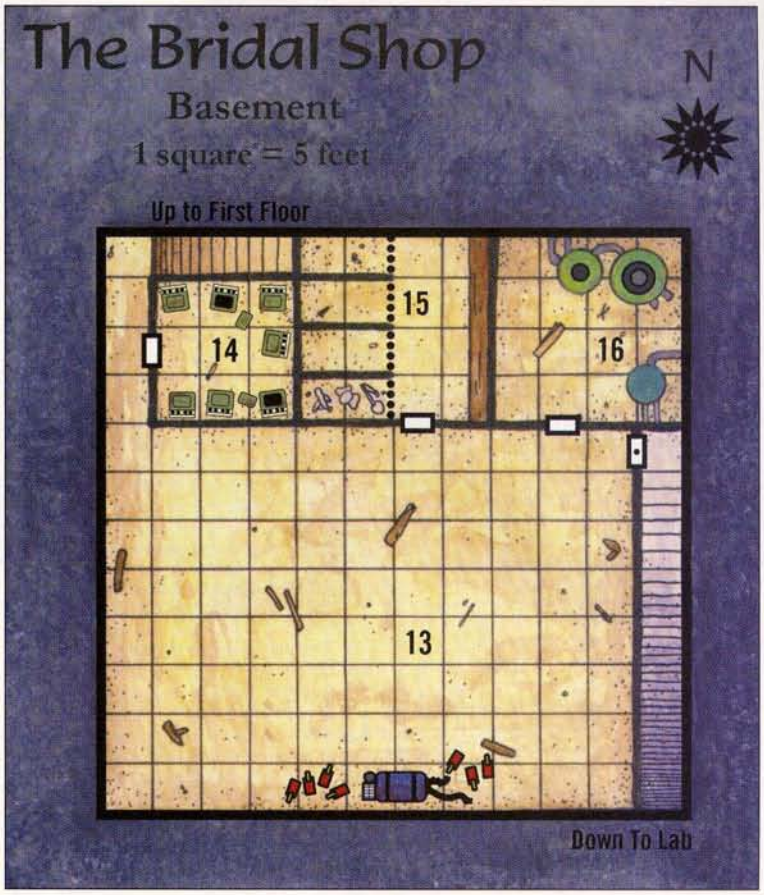
Pelisso Street Swampers, Male Human Zombies (5): hp 18, 16, 15, 12, 9; see area 1 for complete statistics. The 18-hp and 16-hp zombies each carry an automatic pistol (+0 ranged; 1d10/crit ×3).

Treasure: The 18-hp zombie has 25 gp, a half-pack of smokes, and an extra pistol cartridge (20 bullets) tucked in the pockets of his leather jacket.

14. Laundry Room. This dark room contains broken, rusty, coin-operated washers and dryers. None of them is operational.

15. Storage Room. This large, dark room is separated into four gated enclosures once used for storage. The southernmost storage enclosure contains mismatched pieces of mannequins.

16. Boiler Room. The ancient boiler and water heater haven't worked in decades.



Underground Laboratory

The PCs should eventually discover the heart of Kurmi and Tain's operation in Crossroads: the underground laboratory. All of this area is "new construction," having been built only a few months ago. Kurmi and Tain resided here until the unfortunate events that occurred 2 days ago. When the PCs descend the stairs, assuming they have the generator running, read or paraphrase the following boxed text. If they don't get the generator working, the stairs and the rest of the laboratory will be pitch dark, and none of the electronics will function.

> This stairway is clearly not part of the original construction of the building. The steps are clean, newly tiled, and seem to go on forever. The recessed lighting fixtures in the ceiling are fluorescent tubes, which cast a pale, sickly yellow light. The smell of disinfectant is strong, and as you reach the bottom of the steps you can't help feeling you've entered a hospital. A long, narrow, dimly lit corridor lined with doors faces you, with a side corridor off to your right.

Each of the doors has a small brass plate on which is etched a room number and identifier (for example, **202 Genetics**). The only living thing in the underground laboratory is the millexium mouther (formerly Gerhardt Kurmi). The mouther is insane and unbalanced, lacking Kurmi's dedication, concentration, and education, but it is intelligent. It will not engage the PCs en masse, though it will attack any one of them who might be left alone. The mouther can speak, identifying itself as Kurmi. It knows that Tain was responsible for creating it, and it's angry at Tain for doing so, but it can't make the connection to the specifics of its current state. It killed Tain in the laboratory and digested him there.

The mouther can travel easily from room to room through ventilation ducts and plumbing.

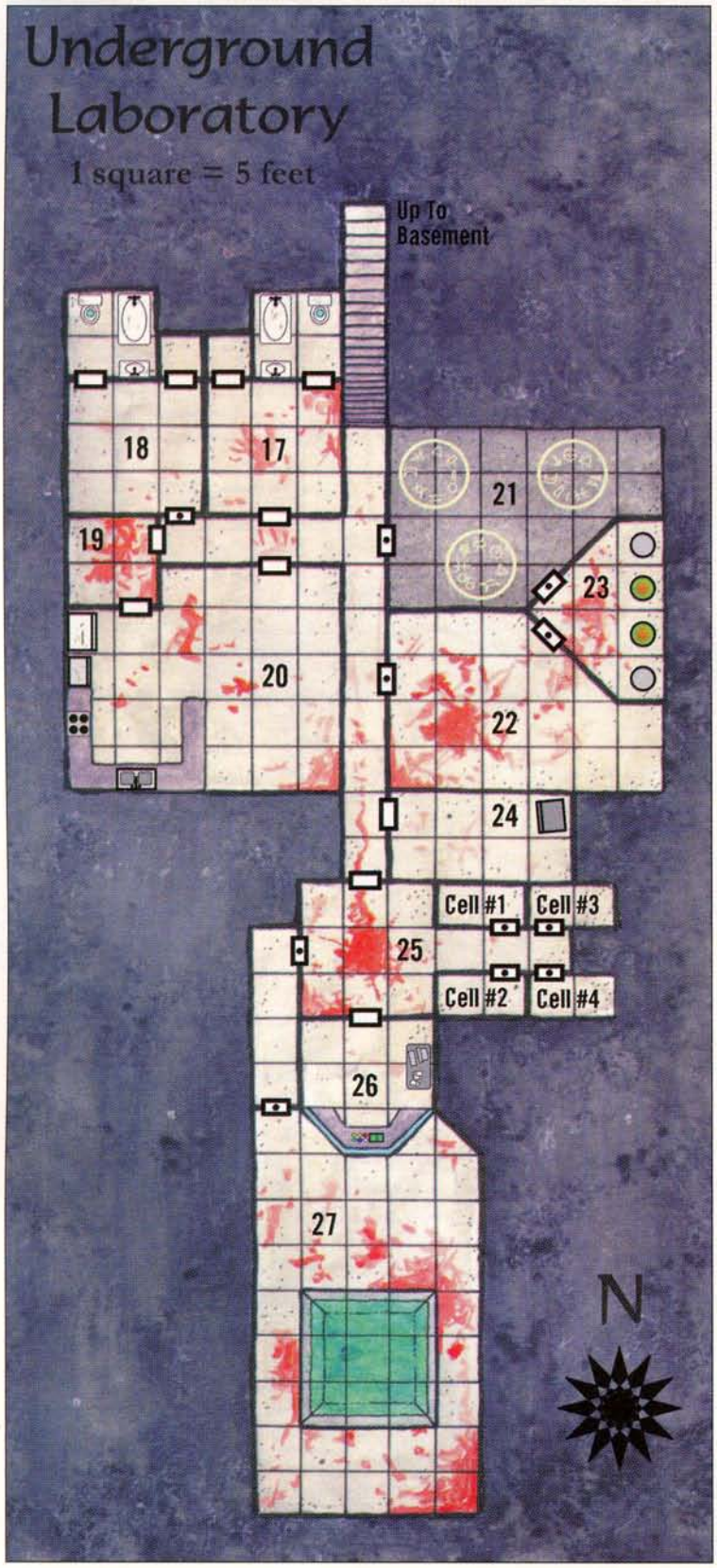
The only thing Tain and Kurmi agreed upon completely was that none of the undead gang members should be allowed into the lab proper, so none of the skeletons or zombies will ever follow the PCs down the stairs.

When the PCs reach the bottom of the stairs, the mouther is quietly resting in its pool in the holding area (area **27**). It hears them before they get to the corridor intersection (near the door to area **21**) and moves to the north end of the lab, peeking out at them to see who they are. Once it identifies the PCs as living beings, it tries to corner and eat at least one of them, hoping to convince the others to bring it to Exit so it can feed on all the tasty millexium it knows is up there. It tries to catch one of the PCs alone, secretly eat him or her, and then befriend the others.

17. Room 101: G. Kurmi. Gerhardt Kurmi's private apartment is a cramped, dark shambles of ripped furniture and broken personal belongings. PCs searching the room find the shattered remains of a laptop computer, damaged beyond all hope of retrieval. Kurmi came here shortly after being turned into a millexium mouther and trashed the place out of blind, incoherent rage.

18. Room 102: F. Tain. Tain's apartment is sparsely furnished with a bed, loveseat, and table. A painting on the east wall shows a pastoral landscape with a cemetery. The closet holds casual clothes and shoes, meticulously hung and organized by color.

19. Room 103: Pantry. There's enough canned food stored here to have kept Kurmi and Tain fed for months. The food is still edible, but many of the cans are covered in a strange, sticky orange slime. The mouther couldn't manage to open them.



20. Room 104: Kitchen. This simple kitchen contains a working refrigerator and separate deep freeze. The generator has been off, but both the freezer and refrigerator have been completely cleaned out of any food. Bits of plastic wrapping and canisters are scattered around the floor, and the outsides of the appliances are spattered with the same sticky orange slime as the cans in the pantry.

21. Room 201: Casting. In this room, the linoleum floor tiles of the rest of the laboratory give way to uneven black slate paving stones. There are no artificial light sources here, and the room is completely dark even if the generator is running. The floor is covered with chalk drawings of various magic circles, symbols, and glyphs. Lining each wall are tall, wrought iron candelabras holding hundreds of dripping wax candles, all currently unlit.

This is where Fergus Tain did most of his magical work on the mouther project, bending the shape and nature of two captured gibbering mouthers into what would become the millexium mouther.

Treasure: A successful Search skill check (DC 20) reveals a loose floor stone, under which PCs can find a large notebook. This is Tain's minor spellbook, which contains the following spells:

0—*detect magic, disrupt undead, mage hand, mending, read magic, resistance;*

1st—*chill touch, detect undead, obscuring mist, protection from evil, ray of enfeeblement;*

2nd—*daylight, ghoul touch, detect thoughts, spectral hand;*

3rd—*gentle repose, halt undead, hold person, magic circle against evil.*

Folded among the pages of the spellbook are several sheets of blank parchment that once held more powerful spells. Tain procured these scrolls and used them to create the millexium mouther.

22. Room 202: Genetics. Immediately after trashing his personal quarters, the millexium mouther Kurmi moved on to this laboratory. The room is ankle deep in broken glass and puddles of thick, sticky orange slime. A pile of cheap notebooks and a laptop computer, all burned and unreadable, lay in the middle of the room.

23. Room 203: Specimens. This small, odd-shaped room contains four tall glass cylinders. Two are empty; two others contain random collections of body parts suspended in a semi-liquid, striped green and orange. Teeth of all shapes and sizes are intermingled with eyeballs, tongues, and other less recognizable parts. These are the two gibbering mouthers Kurmi and Tain used in their experiments. Both of them are dead.

Dimensional Anchor (DIM) Weapons

DIM weapons fire projectiles—usually small caliber, ball bearing-like bullets made of either titanium or newer high density composites. The projectile is set into one end of a long barrel in which are maintained two tiny dimensional portals. The first portal sends the projectile through a narrow dimensional wormhole to a point in space in near-solar orbit, and a point in time approximately 1 hour in the past. The high gravitational forces in this part of space accelerate the projectile, over the course of an hour, to a velocity no form of combustion could ever produce. The projectile then exits through the second dimensional portal a millisecond later. The projectile has lost nearly all of its mass but is now traveling at speeds of close to 15,000 miles per second and is burning at a temperature of 3,100°F.

The projectile—a bit of molten titanium the size of a grain of sand—gets from the end of the barrel to its target so fast it does not make any sound, even as it rapidly cools and resolidifies. DIM weapons have no recoil. A soft thud is usually heard at the same time, or right after, the projectile hits its target.

Exotic Weapons (Firearms)—Ranged	Cost	Weight	Size	Type	Normal Damage	Critical Damage	Range Incr.
DIM Pistol	200 gp	3 lbs.	1h	Piercing	1d12	19–20/×2	100 ft.
DIM Rifle	500 gp	8 lbs.	2h	Piercing	2d8	19–20/×2	300 ft.
Metal Cartridge, DIM Pistol (20)	50 gp	½ lbs.	—	—	—	—	—
Metal Cartridge, DIM Rifle (20)	60 gp	½ lbs.	—	—	—	—	—

24. Room 204: Storage. Shelves lining the walls of this room hold various pieces of laboratory glassware, boxes of latex gloves, syringes, and other medical supplies, plus a case of DIM rifle ammunition (1,000 rounds).

Against the east wall rests a 4 ft. × 4 ft. steel box similar in shape to a small refrigerator with a padlocked metal door. This containment unit was specifically designed to hold the millexium mouther for transport. A large sticker on one side reads: "Danger: Live Animal. Holbrook Shipping." The key for the lock can be found in area **25**.

25. Room 301: Lab. Although labeled "Lab," neither scientist used this room for anything, as all the real work was done in areas **21-22**. In the center of this otherwise empty room is a big puddle of orange slime. Mixed in with this strange semi-liquid is what appears to be a complete set of men's clothes. Observant PCs might recognize the clothes as being the same size and general style as the clothes found in Fergus Tain's closet. Still in the pocket of the pants is a large ring of keys that unlock all of the locked doors in the underground laboratory and the building above, as well as a key that opens the padlocked containment unit in area **24**.

Cells: All but one of the cells are empty. In Cell #1 rests the dead body of a homeless man who obviously died of thirst after being left here when Kurmi killed Tain. The doors to the cells close tightly enough that the millexium mouther can't get in or out. There is no plumbing in the cells either, a small plastic bucket being the only sanitary facilities.

26. Room 302: Control. This dimly lit room has a wall of windows that look out into a much larger, much more brightly lit room beyond. Under the windows rests a desk into which have been mounted controls for temperature, humidity, lights, and so forth, obviously designed to manipulate the environment of the room beyond. A small computer desk on the east wall holds a desktop computer in working order. The files on the computer are password protected and would take even an experienced hacker days to break into. However, one file (labeled "Abstract.mm") can be opened simply by clicking on it. If any of the PCs do this, show them a copy of the sidebar entitled "Research Abstract Synopsis."

27. Room 303: Holding. This room was designed to house the millexium mouther. The floor is covered with gravel, and larger rocks are scattered about. A square, 4-foot-deep pool dominates the center of the room. The water is murky and full of algae, but the mouther likes it just fine.

Treasure: At the bottom of the pool rests a fully functional DIM rifle the mouther stashed there to keep out of enemy hands, although Kurmi is quickly losing touch with what the weapon is and has no recollection how to use it.

Research Abstract Synopsis

Millexium Mouther Project
Kurmi & Tain
7 Harvester, 1998 C.Y.

This project's goal is to create, for commercial uses, a proprietary creature designed for the expressed purpose of gathering raw millexium. The lifeform will be adapted from a creature uncommon to the New Flanaess, known as the gibbering mouther (catalog number 2318-014). The created creature will be known as the millexium mouther (name registered by Kurmi & Tain, 18 Planting, 1998 C.Y.) with all rights to be maintained by the granting authorities.

The millexium mouther will be more intelligent, hence easier to control, than the gibbering mouther (a creature best avoided and proven inappropriate for widespread commercial exploitation). The increase in intelligence will be achieved through the introduction into the amoeboid form of a living human brain. This requirement will affect the cost and increases the necessity for discretion in association with the success of the project. As such, it is recommended that a laboratory be established in a location such that the project can proceed outside the strictures of accepted academia.

Evidence of the viability of the project is available in the form of a computer simulation of the necessary chemical processes and a certified augury provided by the Order of the Uncaring.

Crossroads Random Encounters

The Crossroads neighborhood is a dangerous place. If the PCs spend any time there, they're likely to bump into any of the denizens listed below. Roll 1d10 to determine the encounter and consult the following table:

1-3. The Infidelz (EL 2). The Infidelz (orc biker gang) rush madly around Crossroads and surrounding neighborhoods on a motley collection of old Lynnride motorcycles. They'll attack just about anyone on a whim but flee if met with serious resistance. Leery of magic, they prefer to carry automatic pistols.

Infidelz, Orc Bikers (4): CR 1/2; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 1d8; hp 5 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +2 melee (1d6/crit 19-20, bowie knife); +0 ranged (1d10/crit ×3, automatic pistol); SQ darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +3, Ride (ground vehicle) +1, Spot +3. *Feat:* Alertness (included in the orcs' Listen and Spot skill scores).

SQ–Light Sensitivity (Ex): Without their sunglasses, orcs suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Possessions: Leather jacket and boots, sunglasses, motorcycle, automatic pistol with metal cartridge (1d20 bullets), extra metal cartridge (20 bullets).

4-5. The Crossratz (EL 4). The Crossratz (wererat gang) stick mostly to the sewers but are attracted to any sizable ruckus on the surface. Unlike the orcs, the Crossratz are more civilized and take their roles as protectors of Crossroads seriously. If they perceive the PCs as a threat to the neighborhood, they react with force. They wield lead pipes and rusty knives. In the open, they are usually encountered in human or hybrid form, rarely in dire rat form.

Crossratz, Human Com1 [wererat template] (3): CR 2; Medium-Size/Small Shapechanger; HD 1d8+3 (includes Toughness feat); hp 8 each; Init +0; SQ alternate form and see below; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Human Form: Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +0 melee (1d6, lead pipe; 1d3, knife).

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6. *Feats:* Alertness, Toughness. The Alertness feat is already factored into the Listen and Spot skill scores.

Hybrid Form: Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +0 melee (1d6, lead pipe; 1d3, knife), +1 melee (1d4, bite); SA curse of lycanthropy; SQ scent, damage reduction 15/silver.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +6. *Feats:* Multiattack, Toughness.

Dire Rat Form: Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 17 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d4, bite); SA curse of lycanthropy; SQ rat empathy, scent, damage reduction 15/silver.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Spot +6. *Feats:* Multiattack, Toughness, Weapon Finesse (bite).

SA–Curse of Lycanthropy (Su): When a wererat successfully bites or strikes an opponent with a piercing or slashing weapon, the victim must make a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) or contract lycanthropy. Bludgeoning or nonpenetrating attacks do not transmit the affliction.

SQ–Alternate Form (Su): Changing to or from dire rat or hybrid form is a standard action. Upon assuming either form, a wererat regains hit points as if having rested for a day. A slain wererat reverts to human form and remains dead.

SQ–Rat Empathy (Ex): In their dire rat forms, wererats can communicate and empathize with rats and dire rats, giving them a +4 racial bonus when influencing the animals' attitudes and allowing communication of simple concepts and commands.

SQ–Scent (Ex): In dire rat form, a wererat can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet.

6. Crossroads Police (EL 2). The police patrol Crossroads less frequently than the Infidelz or the Crossratz but tend to be responsible for a bit more mayhem. They travel in groups of no less than two, with two officers to a patrol car. Patrolmen intervene if they see a crime being committed and immediately start taking bids. The lowest bidder goes to jail, regardless of which one might be the victim. They always respond to any resistance with lethal force. Crossroads PD officers can impose fines as they see fit. The amount of a fine is most often (coincidentally enough) exactly equal to all of the cash a given suspect is carrying at the time. The Crossroads Police Barracks is six blocks north of the adventure location. This fortresslike building includes a jail that is routinely the site of torture, murder, and even slave trading.

Patrol Officers, Human War2 (2): CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 2d8+2; hp 10 each; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+3 flak jacket); Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, baton); +2 ranged (1d12/crit 19-20, DIM pistol); AL CN; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 12.

Skills: Intimidate +4, Knowledge (computer literacy) +2, Ride (ground vehicle) +3, Search +1, Spot +3. *Feats:* Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Possessions: Flak jacket, DIM pistol (with metal cartridge containing 20 slugs), four extra pistol cartridges, baton.

7-8. Carrion Crawler (EL 4). This hideous creature crawls up from an open manhole or scuttles out of a vacant building to attack the PCs as they pass by.

Carrion Crawler (1): CR 4; Large Aberration (9 ft. long); HD 3d8+6; hp 21; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 15 ft.; AC 17 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural); Atk +4 melee (paralysis, 8 tentacles), -1 melee (1d4+1, bite); Face 5 ft. × 10 ft.; SA paralysis; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +5; Ability scores Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 1, Wis 15, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +10, Listen +6, Spot +6. *Feat:* Alertness.

SA–Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by the carrion crawler's tentacle attack must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 13) or be paralyzed for 2d6 minutes.

SQ–Scent (Ex): The carrion crawler can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet.

9-10. Dire Rats (EL 1). These dire rats are looking for a meal and attack the PCs on sight, fleeing if startled by loud noises or open flames.

Dire Rats (3): hp 5 each; see area 3 of "Cynthia's Bridal Shop" for full statistics.

Completing the Mission

The computer in area 26 holds all the information necessary to duplicate the work of Kurmi and Tain and manufacture an army of millexium mouthers (and, in so doing, gather the incredibly valuable element known as millexium). The living mouther itself is valuable as a prototype and could make whoever controls it quite wealthy.

The Eighteen, of course, expect some return on its substantial investment, and the PCs must weigh their reaction to how this job was conducted. If the Eighteen feel betrayed by the PCs, they will most likely put a contract out on the PCs' lives. The Eighteen pay the full 5,000 gp to each PC if the mouther is delivered alive to 110 Vista Drive in the city of Exit, and even pay a bonus of 500 gp each for Kurmi's computer with the relevant files. If the Eighteen have any reason to believe that the PCs have duplicated any of the files from this computer, they won't be pleased. They might hire another group of specialists to recover the stolen information, who in turn might use the Infidelz (a gang of orc bikers) as hired muscle. (See the "Crossroads Random Encounters" sidebar for details.)

If the PCs kill the millexium mouther but surrender the computer to the Eighteen, they are paid their 5,000 gp each and sent on their way.

The presence of "double agents" or undercover cops among the PCs might complicate matters. The PCs might even decide to keep either the mouther or the computer files (or both) for themselves and go into business on their own, most likely in Exit. They have a good chance of getting rich if they do but will have made some powerful enemies in the process.

Philip Athans is an editor for the book publishing team at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. He moved to Seattle with the rest of TSR, Inc. in 1997 and published his first novel, Baldur's Gate, *in 1999.*

Encounter Level Chart on page 80

New Skills

Knowledge (Computer Literacy)
You have a basic understanding of the use of modern computer hardware and software.

Check: You can make a check to use any current computer hardware or common, commercially available software. You can install and set up personal computers but have no specific programming knowledge. Complex situations such as designing and setting up networks, complex "hacking," and so forth are not covered by this skill.

Key Ability: Intelligence

Untrained: Yes

Retry: Yes, although a success doesn't cancel the effects of a previous failure.

Ride (Ground Vehicle)
You are trained in the operation of one of a number of common internal combustion or diesel-powered ground vehicles. This skill allows you to drive the following types of vehicles: automobile, motorcycle, snowmobile, truck, tank, forklift, and construction equipment.

Check: Typical street driving does not require a check. Operating any vehicle at high speeds, in a chase or evasion situation, off-road, or in hostile environments, requires periodic checks. Failures can result in catastrophic crashes, mechanical failures, or the vehicle becoming stuck.

Key Ability: Dexterity

Untrained: No

Retry: Only allowed if the previous failure doesn't disable the vehicle.

Millexium Mouther

Small Aberration

Hit Dice:	3d8+3 (hp 17)
Initiative:	+2 (Dex)
Movement:	20 ft., swim 40 ft.
AC:	21 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +8 natural)
Attacks:	6 bites +4 melee
Damage:	Bite 1
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Gibbering, improved grab, blood drain
Special Qualities:	Amorphous
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 13
Skills:	Hide +5, Listen +5, Spot +12, Swim +4
Feats:	Weapon Finesse (bite)
Climate/Terrain:	Any land, aquatic, or underground
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	4
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Chaotic neutral
Advancement:	4-5 HD (Medium-Size), 6-9 HD (Large)

The millexium mouther is a unique creation of Gerhardt Kurmi, a Nilodor Award-winning geneticist, and Fergus Tain, a gifted necromancer. Based on the nearly extinct gibbering mouther, the millexium mouther was created to "sniff out" raw millexium (see below). The millexium mouther differs from its larger cousin in many ways. For safety reasons, Kurmi and Tain selected out certain of the gibbering mouther's more dangerous traits. The millexium mouther cannot spit or manipulate earth, for instance, but is more intelligent than a gibbering mouther.

The mouther can sense millexium and makes a beeline to it. When it finds some millexium, it forms a mouth and swallows it. The mouther cannot digest the millexium, and after a few minutes the rocks simply drop out of it (to be collected by the mouther's handlers). Although the mouther prefers millexium, it instinctively knows it can't survive by eating it, so it eats anything it takes a fancy to along the way. The mouther's desire for millexium is comparable to a "sweet tooth."

Because it's basically a giant amoeba, the millexium mouther can squeeze through incredibly tight places, including narrow pipes and cracks under doors.

The millexium mouther speaks Common, although it seldom says anything other than gibberish.

Combat

The millexium mouther can form as many as six mouths at any one time, each capable of biting for 1 point of damage.

Gibbering (Su): One trait that Kurmi and Tain didn't manage to exclude from their creation was the mouther's propensity to gibber. Anyone within 60 feet who hears this cacophony of blabbering noises must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 13) or be *confused* for 1d2 rounds (as per the *confusion* spell). The millexium mouther can gibber as a free action.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the mouther must hit with a bite attack.

Blood Drain (Ex): Once a mouth fastens itself to a victim (with a second successful grapple check after grabbing), it automatically deals bite damage and drains blood, dealing 1 point of temporary Constitution damage each round. A mouth can be ripped off (dealing 1 point of damage) with a successful Strength check (DC 12) or severed by a normal attack that deals 2 points of damage (AC 18). A severed mouth continues to bite and drain blood for 1d4 rounds after such an attack.

A creature whose Constitution is reduced to zero is killed and absorbed by the mouther, which gains 1 hit point and adds another mouth and pair of eyes to its body.

Amorphous (Ex): The millexium mouther is not subject to critical hits. It has no clear front or back, so it cannot be flanked.

Millexium

Only in the Dæmon Scar can be found the rare and valuable transuranium element millexium. Millexium, also known as radiomagic or dimrock, is a stable isotope of unnilhexium created when radioactive oxygen ions produced in the radioactive fallout of certain early nuclear weapons interacts with the dimensional vortex characteristic of a summoning or invocation. So far no one on Oerth has been able to synthesize this isotope.

In its raw state, millexium appears to be nothing more than a small chip of crystal-embedded rock with a characteristic purple and black swirling pattern. These naturally occurring rocks have a unique magical property and can be used as a sort of magical battery. Over the last few years, refining techniques have been perfected, however, that allows the isotope to be used in a variety of ways to enhance dimensional magic. DIM rifles that have millexium coatings on the inside of their accelerator barrels effectively quadruple their standard range. Any number of magical and magically enhanced mechanical devices have profited from the addition of millexium.

Because it can only be found in the dangerous and prohibited Dæmon Scar, however, millexium is rare and expensive. Many of the nations of the New Flanaess, especially the United Counties of Urnst and Furyondy, have been moving to control or even ban the trade of this extraordinary element.

Submission Guidelines

Your Complete Guide to D&D® Adventure Design

These guidelines are meant to assist authors who wish to submit their modules for publication in DUNGEON Magazine. *Before submitting a D&D® adventure to the magazine, you are strongly encouraged to review the chapters on designing adventures in the* DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide. *This book is invaluable and covers many of the topics mentioned only briefly herein.*

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Double-space your manuscript to allow room for editorial comments. Small corrections can be made on the manuscript (for example, correction of a misspelled word or insertion of a short phrase). You may paperclip the pages of your module together, but do not use staples, plastic spines, or binders. Number each page of your manuscript.

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Artwork and Maps

A finished module should be accompanied by all relevant maps and diagrams. Additional drawings, sketches, and charts might be added for clarification. Group all maps at the end of the module, after the last page of text.

Make sure that all artwork and maps are rendered neatly in ink. The map grid (if any) should be clearly marked without obstructing the map's legibility. Scale lines may be used for outdoor maps. Use a straight edge to draw the straight lines on your final copy. Darken solid areas (such as rock around a dungeon complex). Whenever possible, draw the furnishings or obvious features of an area. Use icons for beds, desks, ladders, trapdoors, curtains, and so forth. Try to make your icons recognizable without a map key.

Remember internal consistency when designing maps. Inhabited areas require provisions for bringing in food, water, light and heat; a method for disposing of waste materials; and ways for the inhabitants to get around easily. Large area maps should conform to known geographical principles; note special cases. Use numerals for rooms in dungeons and other structures, numbered consecutively throughout. (Do not start over with room number 1 on a dungeon's second level.) Always check your maps against the finished text. Make sure you have described all relevant areas on the maps and have not mislabeled anything.

Adventure Design Guide

Use these guidelines and templates when designing D&D adventures. An adventure module contains the following elements, preferably in the given order:

Introduction (Mandatory)

The introduction begins with some small bit of flavor text, a quote, or some other appropriate text. It also provides a one-to-two sentence adventure summary, as well as information on the encounter levels. Also, the introduction contains additional subsections, including the Adventure Background, Adventure Synopsis, and Character Hooks (or For the Players). This is an excellent place to provide DMs with all of the information they need to set up the adventure, including advice on what sections of the core books they might need to reread.

Include a paragraph detailing the class composition and the general level for which they have designed the adventure. Some designs might allow for some flexibility in PC levels; this section can include notes to help DMs scale the adventure for parties of varying size and level. If this section gives instructions on using the adventure for more or fewer than four PCs, or for PCs who are not of the suggested character level, remind the DM that changing the total number of monsters also changes the overall encounter level (EL) of each encounter and most likely the total number of experience points available for a given party.

Adventure Background (Mandatory)

This section provides the DM with a clear, brief summary of events leading up to the adventure, including any pertinent historical details and villainous machinations.

Adventure Synopsis (Mandatory)

This section provides a clear, concise summary of the adventure for the DM, including a "road map" or timeline that tells the DM how the adventure should play out. Outline surprises and "plot twists" here, not during the course of the adventure. Optionally, this section might also include a brief description of the adventuring environment, as well as special rules, adventure hooks, and other suggestions to "get the ball rolling."

For the Players or Character Hooks (Mandatory)

This section helps DMs lead the PCs into the actual adventure. It offers ways to inject PCs into the adventure. At least one motive should be simple and straight-forward, such as hunting for treasure or fighting evil creatures for pay. Other motives can exploit alignment, class, race, and society.

Here's an adventure hook designed to lead PCs to the dungeons beneath a mountain: "A dwarf in the party is the distant relative of a renowned dwarven smith believed to have died under the mountain. Now that he has proved himself capable, his family expects him to find the smith's remains and insure that he is buried properly. The clan leader distributes a gift to each character who agrees to participate (a magic or special item worth about 1,000 gp), and dwarven characters might even be able to earn a special favor upon completion of the quest." Even if the DM does not use the more specific alternative motives, they still serve the purpose of showing the DM how to use character and world details to create plot hooks.

This section can also contain rumors and background information for players. Other potential elements include town statistics, time of year, and other relevant bits. If you include information and rumors, include information that a bard might know thanks to bardic knowledge, rumors that characters can gain by using the Gather Information skill, things that characters might know based on Knowledge checks, and (at higher levels) knowledge that spellcasters might gain through divinations.

Dungeon Features (Optional)
Some dungeons have features that are common throughout. For instance, how high are the ceilings? How are rooms illuminated? What types of doors are prevalent? (This includes such information as thickness of door and material doors are composed of, which has rule-specific implications for hit points and hardness.) What about wandering monsters? Rather than repeat this information throughout the adventure, keep the information in one section. This information can be presented as a sidebar.

Encounters (Mandatory)
The adventure itself consists of a series of planned encounters keyed to a map or timeline. Each encounter can include any or all of the following sections: **Read-aloud Text**, **General Description**, **Trap(s)**, **Treasure**, **Creature(s)**, **Tactics**, and **Development**. Do not include sections that are unnecessary for a given encounter. For instance, an area devoid of traps does not require a trap section. Each encounter should be rated with an encounter level (EL #), allowing the DM to quickly assess the possible threat to his or her PCs.

Read-Aloud Text (Optional)

Set off in a shaded box, this section generally precedes the other entries of an encounter, though text might precede it if important to the encounter. The read-aloud text (otherwise known as boxed text) should be read aloud to the players at an opportune time. It also provides the DM with a description of items in the room. Read-aloud text provides a bare-bones description of the encounter area; it does not make any reference to the viewer. Avoid phrases such as "you see," "as you enter the room," or other phrases that assume any action whatsoever on the players' parts.

General Description (Mandatory)

This section provides the DM with information on interesting features, creatures, traps, and other specifics of the encounter that play off the read-aloud text. This information immediately follows the read-aloud text and is not set off in any special way. Simple encounters can get by with just the general description. However, a particularly complex encounter might require more structure.

Trap(s) (Optional)

The Trap section describes in detail any traps (magic or mundane) that PCs might trigger in the encounter.

Creature(s) (Optional)

Any creature the PCs might encounter is described here. This section provides a physical description of the monster or NPC, as well as general motivations and background.

Include the appropriate creature's statistics. See "D&D Specific Formats" below for the proper way to format creature statistics.

Tactics (Optional)

If the actions or tactics of the creatures are too complex to handily fit into the general description, they can be described in this section.

Treasure (Optional)

Any treasure that the PCs can find during the encounter is described here, above and beyond possessions noted in the monster statistics, if any. Special items, such as new magic items, should be listed here; however, the full presentation of a new magic item or other special item should go into the appendix.

Avoid petty treasures, such as "2d6 sp" and other pocket change. Keeping track of miniscule amounts of treasure isn't worth the time and effort and only slows down the game. Give individual creatures worthwhile treasures or nothing.

Development (Optional)

Sometimes the PCs' actions can have unusual ramifications or affect later encounters. These changes and developments should be described here.

Special Note
Creatures and traps that pose a threat to the PCs have a Challenge Rating (CR). The rules for determining Challenge Ratings for NPCs and traps are in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*; monster Challenge Ratings are in the *Monster Manual*.

Individual encounters possess an overall rating called the Encounter Level (EL), if appropriate. The concept of Encounter Level is important only as a point of information to the DM, allowing him or her to gauge the strength of any particular encounter at a glance. To calculate experience for a given encounter, refer to the Challenge Rating provided for each creature. Cross-reference the CR of a given creature with the party's average character level on the Single Monster Challenge Rating table (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, Chapter 7), then multiply that number by the number of creatures dealt with by the PCs for the total experience award. The total XP award is then divided by the number of PCs (and NPC party members) who were present at the beginning of the encounter.

Concluding the Adventure (Mandatory)
Describing the possible consequences resulting from the adventure's success or failure, including rewards, punishments, and spin-off adventures for later gaming sessions. Some of the consequences should be roleplayed to provide a sense of closure. If the PCs succeeded at their task, the DM should have the tools necessary to help the players feel that they have accomplished something. It never hurts to provide read-aloud text to get the ending scene started.

Appendix (Optional)
An appendix (if required) should appear at the end of your manuscript, and it might encapsulate any of the following: random encounter tables, rumor tables, new magic item descriptions, new spell descriptions, and new monster descriptions.

"Scaling the Adventure" Sidebar (Mandatory)
This sidebar contains suggestions the DM can use for (a) modifying the adventure's encounters and antagonists for PCs of higher or lower level and/or (b) modifying the adventure for different game settings. The sidebar should be no longer than 500 words.

D&D Specific Formats

The following sections include information you need before writing an adventure.

Capitalization

Capitalize abilities (Strength, Dexterity, and so on), skill names (Search, Decipher Script, and so on), feat names (Whirlwind Attack, Quicken Spell, and so on), domains (Good, War, and so on), schools (Transmutation, Necromancy, and so on), names of languages (Common, Dwarven, and so on), sizes (Small, Medium-size, Large, and so on), and saving throw categories (Fortitude, Reflex, Will). The term "Dungeon Master" and the abbreviation "DM" are always capitalized.

Creatures, classes, alignments, spells, weapons, and magic items, that do not include proper nouns are all lower case.

Magic items and spell names are *italicized*. For example, magic weapons, potions, and other items should be fully italicized; scrolls are an exception. Spell scrolls have only the name of the spell italicized.

Examples: *+1 longsword*, a *potion of cure light wounds*, and a scroll of *arcane lock*.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations usually use all capital letters and no periods (DM, NPC, HD, XP). The abbreviations for hit points and coins use lower case letters and no periods (hp, gp, sp). The abbreviation for experience points is XP.

Ability scores are abbreviated as follows: Str (Strength), Dex (Dexterity), Con (Constitution), Int (Intelligence), Wis (Wisdom), Cha (Charisma). Class abbreviations are as follows:

Abj = Abjurer (1)
Arc = Arcane Archer (3)
Asn = Assassin (3)
Blk = Blackguard (3)
Clr = Cleric
Com = Commoner (2)
Div = Diviner (1)
Enc = Enchanter (1)
Exp = Expert (2)
Ill = Illusionist (1)
Mnk = Monk
Pal = Paladin
Rog = Rogue
Sor = Sorcerer
War = Warrior (2)
Adp = Adept (2)
Ari = Aristocrat (2)
Bbn = Barbarian
Brd = Bard
Cjr = Conjurer (1)
Def = Dwarven Defender (3)
Drd = Druid
Evo = Evoker (1)
Ftr = Fighter
Lor = Loremaster (3)
Nec = Necromancer (1)
Rgr = Ranger
Shd = Shadowdancer (3)
Tra = Transmuter (1)
Wiz = Wizard

Bold classes appear in the *PH*. Other classes are as follows:
(1) Specialist wizard classes appearing in the *PH*.
(2) NPC classes appearing in the *DMG*.
(3) Prestige classes appearing in the *DMG*.

Numbers

Numerals should be used for any measurement of distance expressed in yards (or meters) or any smaller unit. The spelled-out form of the number should be used for any expression of distance longer than yards (or meters), except when the expression is a specific large number. **Correct:** 750 miles, fifteen miles, 15 feet.

Numerals should be used for any measurement of time expressed in hours or any smaller unit. The spelled-out form should be used for any expression of time longer than hours, except when the expression is a specific large number. **Correct:** 648 years, forty-eight years, forty-eight days, 48 hours, 48 minutes.

Numerals should be used for any measurement of weight expressed in pounds (or kilograms) or any smaller unit. The spelled-out form of a number should be used for any expression of weight larger than pounds (or kilograms), except when the expression is a specific large number. **Correct:** twenty tons, 20 lbs.

Numerals are always used for geometric angles (for example, 45 degrees) and expressions of temperature (for example, 45°F), ability scores, skill ranks, skill points, creature statistics, amounts of currency, level references ("1st level," not "first level"), bonuses and penalties, experience points, dice designators (and say d%, not d100), multipliers, number of charges (in the context of a magic item that has charges), and number of times per day or other unit of time in a stat block (written as 2/day, 3/day, and so on).

Hyphenation

Always hyphenate class and spell levels when they precede a noun (4th-level rogue, 1st-level spell). Hyphenate compound adjectives before nouns (the red-haired, 18-foot-tall fire giant). Do not hyphenate before the suffix like except after double-l endings (for example, snakelike, spell-like).

Skill Checks

When a situation in an adventure calls for a skill check of some sort, list the skill check in the running text and present a parenthetical with the DC number.

Example: Player characters who want to enter the chamber must make a successful Climb skill check (DC 25) to get down the wall.

Example: Casting a spell while entangled requires a successful Concentration skill check (DC 15).

Remember that characters can usually retry skill checks (and usually take 20) or take 10. If the use of a skill is not routine, let the DM know in the adventure text whether a retry is allowed and what it entails. Generally, set DCs for tasks that characters can retry at 5 to 10 points higher than DCs for tasks that PCs can't retry.

Trap Presentation

Traps have several associated DC values the DM needs to adjudicate the PCs' application of their various skills. Whenever a trap is encountered, the following specific information should also be presented in the format below.

Examples:

Arrow Trap: CR 1/2; +5 ranged (1d6/crit ×3); Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 20).

Poisoned Arrow Trap: CR 1; +5 ranged (1d6/crit ×3) and poison, Fortitude save negates (DC 14; 1d6 temporary Str/1d6 temporary Str); Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 20).

Spiked Pit Trap (40 feet deep): CR 3; no attack roll necessary (4d6 points of damage), +10 melee (1d4 spikes for 1d4+4 points of damage per successful hit); Reflex save avoids (DC 20); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Glyph of Warding: CR 1; 5-ft. acid spray (2d8 points of damage); Reflex save for half damage (DC 15); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28).

Creature Statistics

When D&D creatures and NPCs are described under **Creatures**, be sure to include full statistics. Omit categories for creatures that do not possess corresponding abilities, such as a Special Ability (SA) or Spell Resistance (SR). Skills and Feats should be listed alphabetically. The stat block should be presented as a separate paragraph:

Nonclassed creature's name (number appearing): CR # (Challenge Rating); Size and type and subtype (# ft. tall or long); HD #d# (Hit Dice); hp # (hit points); Init +# (initiative modifier); Spd # ft. (speed); AC # (Armor Class); Atk +# melee (damage, attack type) or +# ranged (damage, attack type); Face (list if other than 5 ft. × 5 ft.); Reach (list if other than 5 ft.); SA (brief description of special attacks); SQ (brief description of special qualities); SR # (spell resistance); AL (alignment); SV Fort +#, Ref +#, Will +# (saving throws); Str #, Dex #, Con #, Int #, Wis #, Cha # (ability scores).

Skills (list all skills and modifiers, alphabetically). *Feats* (list all feats, alphabetically).

Spells (list alphabetically, by level, if necessary).

SA–Type (explain special attacks, if necessary).

SQ–Type (explain special qualities, if necessary).

Possessions (if any).

Classed creature's name, gender and race and class and level: CR # (challenge rating); Size and type and subtype (# ft. tall or long); HD #d# plus #d# (Creature Hit Dice + Class Hit Dice); hp # (hit points); Init +# (initiative modifier); Spd # ft. (speed); AC # (Armor Class); Atk +# melee (damage, attack type), or +# ranged (damage, attack type); Face (list if other than 5 ft. × 5 ft.); Reach (list if other than 5 ft.); SA (special attacks); SQ (special qualities); SR # (spell resistance); AL (alignment); SV Fort +#, Ref +#, Will +# (saving throws); Str #, Dex #, Con #, Int #, Wis #, Cha # (ability scores).

Skills (list all skills and values, alphabetically). *Feats* (list all feats, alphabetically).

Spells (list alphabetically, by level, if necessary).

SA–Type (explain special attacks, if necessary).

SQ–Type (explain special qualities, if necessary).

Possessions (if any).

Single-classed NPC's name, gender and race and class and level: CR # (challenge rating); Size and type and subtype; HD #d# (Class Hit Dice); hp (hit points); Init +# (initiative modifier); Spd # ft. (speed); AC # (Armor Class); Atk +# melee (damage, attack type), or +# ranged (damage, attack type); Face (list if other than 5 ft. × 5 ft.); Reach (list if other than 5 ft.); SA (brief description of special attacks); SQ (brief description of special qualities); SR # (spell resistance); AL (alignment); SV Fort +#, Ref +#, Will +# (saving throws); Str #, Dex #, Con #, Int #, Wis #, Cha # (ability scores).

Skills (list all skills and values, alphabetically). *Feats* (list all feats, alphabetically).

Spells (list alphabetically, by level, if necessary).

SA–Type (explain special attacks, if necessary).

SQ–Type (explain special qualities, if necessary).

Possessions (if any).

For spellcasters, spells should be listed in alphabetical order by level; numerical indicators should separate each level of spells from the next. For example, here's a sample spell list for a 5th-level wizard with 15 Intelligence:

Spells (4/4/3/1): 0–*dancing lights, detect magic, mending, read magic*; 1st–*magic missile* (×2), *summon monster I, sleep*; 2nd–*levitate, see invisibility, summon swarm*; 3rd–*fireball*.

For clerics, list domain spells separately after the cleric's main spell list. For example, here's a list of selected domain spells for a 5th-level cleric of St. Cuthbert with the Protection and Strength domains:

Domain Spells (1/1/1): 1st–*sanctuary;* 2nd–*bull's strength;* 3rd–*magic vestment.*

Multiclassed NPC's name, gender and race and class and level: CR # (challenge rating); Size and type and subtype; HD #d# plus #d# (Class Hit Dice for each class); hp (hit points); Init +# (initiative modifier); Spd # ft. (speed); AC # (Armor Class); Atk +# melee (damage, attack type), or +# ranged (damage, attack type); Face (list if other than 5 ft. x 5 ft.); Reach (list if other than 5 ft.); SA (brief description of special attacks); SQ (brief description of special qualities); SR # (spell resistance); AL (alignment); SV Fort +#, Ref +#, Will +# (saving throws); Str #, Dex #, Con #, Int #, Wis #, Cha # (ability scores).

Skills (list all skills and values, alphabetically). *Feats* (list all feats, alphabetically).

Spells (list alphabetically, by level, if necessary).

SA–Type (explain special attacks, if necessary).

SQ–Type (explain special qualities, if necessary).

Possessions (if any).

Abbreviated Stat Blocks

Abbreviated stat blocks for creatures and NPCs are acceptable in noncombat encounters. Where a commoner or other unimportant NPC is noted but is not vital to the adventure, list only the NPC's gender, template, class, and any relevant skills or feats bearing on the encounter.

If you're creating an adventure that uses the same monster type in several different locations, present full statistics the first time the monster type is encountered and abbreviated statistics (listing only hit points) for encounters after the first. The abbreviated stat block for ankhegs might look as follows:

City and Town Statistics

Much like creatures, cities and towns in the D&D game have a wide range of information that the DM needs to know to run encounters within the city. The suggested format for writing statistics for cities and towns is as follows:

Name (size): Power structure type; AL type; # gp limit; Assets # gp; Population #; Demographic category (race #%, race #%, race #%, race #%, race #%, race #%, race #%, and so on).

Authority Figure(s): name, gender and race and class and level.

Important Characters: name, gender and race and class and level (title or position).

Others: class and level (#); class and level (#). Name the type of position a group fills, such as town guards, palace guards, Thieves' Guild members, and so on.

Notes: Place any special notes about the community here.

Example:

Oakhurst (small town): Conventional; AL NG; 1,000-gp limit; Assets 45,000 gp; Population 901; Mixed (human 79%, halfling 9%, elf 5%, dwarf 3%, gnome 2%, half-elf 1%, half-orc 1%).

Authority Figures: Mayor Vurnor Leng, male human Ari7.

Important Characters: Kerowyn Hucrele, female human Com6 (merchant); Dem "Corkie" Nackle, female gnome Clr4 (Pelor/healer); Felosial, female half-elf War4 (constable); Ben, Lu, Jym, and Rhoda, male and female humans War3 (deputies); Rurik Lutgehr, male dwarf Exp3 (blacksmith); Garon, male human Exp3 ("Ol' Boar Inn" barkeep).

Others: Town guards, War2 (×12); Exp3 (×8); Rog3 (×2); Rgr2 (×1); Com1 (×782).

Notes: The saplings growing at the edge of town go missing, possibly during the PCs very next visit to Oakhurst. Unbeknownst to the villagers, the saplings animate in the dark of night, and they scuttle off on their own, continuing their slow colonization of the surface.

Object Statistics

Any items that the player characters might need to interact with in some manner should have statistics in the manuscript. Common examples include doors, chairs, chests, and barrels.

Object: # in. or ft. thick; Hardness #; hp #; Break DC #.

Example:

Wooden Door: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 18.

If an object needs only a few of these statistics listed, this can be done in running text, like wooden chair (Hardness 5, hp 10).

Magic Item Format

New magic items should be listed in the appendix at the end of the adventure. When devising new magic items, use a format similar to the Magic Items chapter in the *DMG*, shown below:

Magic Item: Descriptive text about the item and its powers should go here. It might take more than one paragraph to completely detail the item.

Caster Level: #

Prerequisites: feats, skills, spells, etc. (in alphabetical order)

Market Price: # gp

Weight: # pound(s)

Tense

Write in the present tense. Wherever possible, avoid using the future tense "will" to describe NPC or creature actions. For example, do not say "If the characters open the door, the golem *will attack*." Instead say, "If the characters open the door, the golem *attacks*."

Damage

Use the phrase "points of damage" when giving damage in numbers or ranges. Always use a die range when giving damage, and always include a numeral before the type of die, even if there is only one. For example: "The skeleton deals 1d3 points of damage with each claw" is correct. Do not use "d3 points of damage," "1d3 damage," or "1d3 hp damage." Creatures *deal* or *take* damage. They do not *inflict* or *suffer* damage.

Ability damage or drain uses the appropriate ability score abbreviation and terminology. Use the following formats in running text or stat block text:

temporary [ability name] damage
permanent [ability name] drain

For example: "If the saving throw fails, the character takes 1d6+1 temporary Strength damage from the poison."

Miscellaneous

The names of magic items and spells should be *italicized* or underlined. List all pluses before the description of the item (*+3 longsword* is correct; *longsword +3* is wrong).

List jewels in order of descending value. If there is more than one jewel with the same value, note how many there are in parentheses after the value.

For example: "The pouch contains fifteen gems worth 1,000 gp, 500 gp (×2), 100 gp (×5), and 50 gp (×7) respectively."

Design Tips

Before setting out to write an adventure, familiarize yourself with the rules and game setting. Be aware of the specifics of the game system for which you are writing.

Describe encounters fully. Make sure no relevant details of encountered creatures are left out (including hit points, ability scores, and so on). With the first mention of a creature, detail the weapons and equipment carried by the creature, along with relevant personality and reaction notes. Major NPCs should be well-rounded characters with specific motivations and behaviors consistent with their alignment. All encounters, hazards, rewards, details on the environment, and information required for combat or accomplishing the mission should be detailed in a way that enables the DM to run through the scenario without trouble.

We prefer adventures with strong plot elements (good stories). The encounters in an adventure should relate directly to the adventuring goal. Encounters that are interconnected and critical to the adventure's plot are best. Illogical adventure setups in which monsters and treasures are randomly thrown together should be avoided. This does not mean one cannot use random encounter tables, but the tables should be logical and consistent with the adventuring environment, making the overall adventure sensible and believable.

Indoor complexes laid out in perfect symmetry are dull; use creativity, even if the final result isn't perfect architecture. Avoid using large mazes.

Situations in your module that violate established game rules should be handled carefully. Do not alter game rules. Other alterations, such as new monsters and treasures, are permissible but should not be overused. You may also add new material that expands on the rules, such as rules on adventuring in unusual environments.

A good adventure includes encounters that challenge both the players and the characters. Furthermore, the adventure should test the various classes and skills in the party so that no player character feels excluded or superfluous. An adventure

that contains nothing but combat encounters is not as interesting or well balanced as one that combines combat encounters, traps, puzzles, and roleplaying opportunities.

Consider ways to surprise players with each encounter: cunning ways to use monsters and traps, clever methods to conceal treasure, and so forth. When devising encounters, consider giving PCs multiple ways to succeed. Not all encounters can be won with swords and *fireballs*, not every monster "fights to the death," and not every trap or puzzle has just one solution.

Don't over-reward players or under-challenge them. Take the time to make rewards consistent and believable as well as balanced. (Note that the *DMG* provides rules for determining how much treasure is appropriate for any given encounter.) Nonmonetary rewards (such as a lord's gratitude or small plot of land) are equally favorable. Do not create opponents that would totally overwhelm a party.

We will look at any innovative ideas that involve changes in a module's structure. Such innovations should not, however, interfere with the playability of the module or the gamers' enjoyment.

Ideas To Explore

Modules that present new magic items, monsters, weapons, or prestige classes are not as interesting as modules that present fast-paced, exciting, enjoyable adventures. If you create something new (such as a new magic item used by an important NPC), make sure its presence in the module is justified, that it is fully explained in terms of its effects in the game, and that it is reasonable and fits with the game rules.

Location-based adventures are preferable to event-based ones. Unlike event-based scenarios, which tend to rely on rigid timelines, location-based scenarios are based around interesting sites that characters can explore for one or more sessions: for example, dungeons, castles, strongholds, catacombs, ancient ruins, or cities. Adventures that present fantastic locations filled with diverse, well-thought-out encounters are ideal. For more information on designing location-based adventures, consult the *DMG*.

We are also interested in short adventures under 2,000 words ("Side Treks") that can be easily dropped into an evening's game. Unusual monster lairs, city encounters, and small ruins may be presented, but each should be unique, interesting, well detailed, and backed by a compelling story.

Elements an Adventure Should Have

Incorporating the suggestions below provides depth to your design. These suggestions allow every character class a chance to shine. It provides several alternatives to straight combat encounters. It might provide you with ideas you might not have otherwise entertained. Look at it as an inspirational list, not a recipe to be strictly followed.

Action

Action is fun. Action is good. Promote action. Make the players want to take action. Don't coerce characters to act; when you do, you create a split between what the players want (to go on the adventure) and what the PCs want (not to go on the adventure).

Start with action. A typical gaming group has several minutes to an hour of "preparation" at the start of a session. Once the adventure is underway, the dice should start rolling (at least figuratively) very soon.

Conclude with action. Let the actions of the PCs (not the actions of NPCs) resolve the adventure.

Reward action. Players would usually rather act than think. Build encounters that reward the players for taking the initiative. (This doesn't mean that the PCs should always win when they stumble through an adventure. A fight is rewarding to the players even if it's a big drain for the PCs.) Thinking is OK too. Some encounters should reward (or even require) thought. A good balance is an encounter that PCs can handle by brute force or that they can handle more easily with some good tactics.

Warn players when action is bad. If you're going to reward and encourage action most of the time, it's only fair to give players some warning when the PCs are coming to an encounter where "kicking open the door" is a bad idea. That way they can appreciate a "thinking" encounter as a good thinking encounter rather than stumbling into it and finding it to be a bad combat encounter.

Be careful about traps. If you sprinkle in traps randomly, the smart PC response is to take every room or area slowly and cautiously. That might be smart, but it's boring. Some hint that the characters are entering a trapped area helps the players slow down and be cautious when they need to without slowing the whole game to a crawl.

Danger

An adventure needs danger, but not too much. For a character to rise one level requires that she face 13-14 encounters on average. If her chance to die in an average encounter is even 5%, she has just over a 50% chance to make it to the next level.

Randomness is dangerous. In any contest, an increase in randomness favors the underdog. The monsters are the underdogs because the PCs almost always win. Thus, any increase in randomness favors the monsters. These things increase randomness:

- High crit multiples (axes, scythes, picks, and so forth)
- Concealment (miss chances)
- Single, powerful creatures
- "Save or sink" powers: poison, petrification, death gaze, and the like.

Vary the danger level. Make some encounters weaker and others stronger. If the characters have a chance to recover or are likely to be fresh, you can increase the danger (the Encounter Level). If the characters are likely to be weak or if they have to fight a series of encounters, be careful. Even a fight that they're certain to win at full strength can kill weakened party members and can drain them to the point at which later encounters become lethal.

Peak fights are cool. Players want to take on the big boss monster. Let them, but be careful. If they've had to fight past guards and traps, they'll be weak by the time they face the boss. If his defenses are good, he doesn't have to be more than a single EL above the party level to be dangerous.

Other Encounter Types

- Tactical positioning of PCs/NPCs
- Encounters you can "outsmart" (and bypass thereby)
- Encounters you can make easier by thinking
- Monsters/encounters you should probably run from
- Roleplaying encounters ("Let's make a deal...")
- Sonic attacks (for bard to counter)
- Area attacks (so rogues and monks can use evasion)

- Encounters where PCs should have to use abilities of their level (5th-level PCs can fly, so there should be an encounter that assumes that at least one PC can fly)
- Climbing, falling, and doing stuff in high places
- Aerial attacks
- Fear (so the paladin can shine)
- Undead (for the cleric)
- Traps (for the rogue)
- Locked doors (for the rogue)
- Secret doors (for elves and the rogue)
- Normal animals (so the druid can use her animal affinity-related abilities)
- Darkness (and other environmental hazards)
- Use of cover and concealment
- Subdual damage
- Situations in which skills and feats are more applicable than spells and items
- Grappling
- Counterspelling
- Alliances (PCs with NPCs, PCs with monsters, NPCs with monsters, monsters with monsters, and so on)
- NPCs that think like PCs
- Multiclass/prestige classes
- Monster classes
- Poison
- Gaze attacks
- Spell enhancement (pre-cast spells of creatures)

Things To Avoid

Avoid stereotypical material. We will usually reject any adventure in which the heroes must:

- Rescue someone's kidnapped daughter.
- Solve a murder perpetrated by a doppelganger.
- Retrieve an ancient artifact.
- Battle a deranged wizard or sorcerer.
- Repel a simple humanoid infestation.
- Defeat an undead army.
- Close a gate to the Abyss or similarly infernal plane.

This list is not all-inclusive. There are many more overused plot devices that might seem new and fresh to you, but that we see many times each month. (This includes beginning your adventure in a tavern or inn. Don't do it.) We're looking for new ideas or fresh approaches to old ideas. We do not accept adventures that require evil PCs or that ask the PCs to slay good characters or monsters.

Avoid excessively linear plots that force the story toward an inevitable conclusion or "railroad" the actions of the PCs. The adventure should be flexible enough for PCs to make choices and decisions that could affect the outcome of the story. Avoid rigid timelines.

High-level adventures should keep the balance of the game in perspective and should challenge the players without damaging the DM's world set-up. Adventures that require the characters to kill deities or "save the world" are not likely to be accepted. Avoid adventures that propose dramatic changes to the campaign world. This includes adventures in which the fate of entire kingdoms hangs in the balance, where the world is threatened by some great cataclysm, or deities play active roles in the outcome of a scenario.

Tastelessness should be strictly avoided. *Do not submit adventures involving the destruction of children or helpless persons, cruel mistreatment of animals, excessive gore or violence, descriptions of Satan or Satanism, or game versions of major religious figures. Explicit sex, the encouragement of substance abuse, offensive language, and bathroom humor cannot be used.*

Remember that the PCs are the protagonists and central figures of the adventure. Do not use NPCs to help the player characters excessively. NPCs who step in and eliminate all opposition to the PCs, lead the PC party, and accomplish the PCs' goals for them are very dangerous to campaigns. Set up the adventure to challenge the PCs, and let them make it on their own.

Do NOT ...

- Design magic items or spells that confer dodge bonuses
- Use defunct rules from previous editions.
- Create a character ability that requires an activation check for use (for example, 30% chance to succeed at something)
- Create a feat or a magic item that allows a nonspellcasting character (of a nonspellcasting class) to cast a spell.
- Use the word "memorized" when referring to the preparation of spells; "prepared" is the correct term.

Adventure Settings

Our readers prefer "generic" adventures that fit easily into any campaign setting. Thus, we are looking for generic adventures that suit a variety of settings with minimal effort. Adventures not limited to a particular game setting have a better chance of acceptance than adventures restricted to one particular D&D campaign setting. The fewer setting-specific details you include in your adventure, the more useful the scenario. Try to confine your adventure to a relatively small area; it's far simpler for DMs to insert a town into their ongoing campaigns than an entire kingdom.

All generic adventures should conform to the campaign rules presented in the *DMG* and use the same pantheon of deities presented in the core rules. The *Player's Handbook* provides a list of D&D deities; we prefer that you use this list instead of creating your own deities.

In addition to generic adventures, we also publish adventures set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting. FORGOTTEN REALMS adventures are published less frequently than generic D&D scenarios, and only when excellent adventures in this setting become available.

We are not looking for adventures designed specifically for out-of-print campaign settings (including the AL-QADIM®, BIRTHRIGHT®, DARK SUN®, DRAGONLANCE®, MYSTARA®, PLANESCAPE®, RAVENLOFT®, and SPELLJAMMER® campaign settings). However, we are looking for generic adventures that include "Adapting the Adventure" sidebars explaining how DMs can modify the adventures for specific, out-of-print campaign settings. For example, if your are submitting a planar adventure, try to include a sidebar describing how the module can be modified to suit the PLANESCAPE campaign setting (and possibly other campaign settings as well).

Adventures may also be based on previously published modules copyrighted by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Do not use settings or material extracted from copyrighted sources other than those owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Playtesting Submissions

Your module should be playtested before you complete the final draft. The best playtesting is done by an inexperienced DM and group who try to play from the manuscript without help.

Experienced players are a good way to find rule inconsistencies, but they may gloss over basic aspects of play or assume local house rules, thereby missing some problems. The least efficient method of playtesting is for you—the author—to run the game, because you tend to mentally fill in the holes, especially holes in game mechanics and encounter staging.

We prefer that adventures be playtested using four characters of equal level (for example, four 6th-level characters). Each character should possess "standard" abilities and equipment for her given class.

In terms of game mechanics, was enough information given to run the adventure's NPCs, supporting characters, and creatures? Were there any rules questions that came up during play? Did you need to reference any rules? Was the amount of treasure and magic items given out appropriate?

For manuscript organization, consider: Was the text of the adventure easy to understand? Were any sections contradictory? Were any important points not covered? Was the information given in a logical order? Were the maps and diagrams neat, clearly labeled, and easy to use?

Narrative elements are vital to making a manuscript fun to read and play. Did the adventure hook work, or did the players have to be railroaded? Was the pacing too fast or too slow? Were there encounters that interfered with the flow of the adventure? Did the plot flow logically from the background? Were the NPCs' actions consistent with their goals and alignment? Did the manuscript help create the proper mood? Is the conclusion satisfying?

Finally, are the challenges appropriate for the recommended level(s) of play? Was the adventure a "killer dungeon" or a cakewalk? Was the DM ever forced to "fudge" things in the party's favor to keep the adventure going? Did the players solve mysteries easily, or did they need lots of hints?

Appendix A: Back To the Dungeon!

One of the goals of 3rd Edition is to take the D&D game "back to the dungeon." Dungeons facilitate game play. Being underground, dungeons set apart the "adventure" from the rest of the world in a clean way. Of course, not all dungeons must be underground. "Dungeon" could mean any self-contained environment. This includes castles, ancient ruins, outer-planar strongholds, and other locales. One of the virtues of the "dungeon" is that it can be transplanted easily into any D&D campaign with minimal effort.

In a dungeon, the parameters are clearly defined for the players—they can't go beyond the walls or into rooms that aren't there. Still, they can go wherever they like in whatever order they like. There is a feeling of control of one's own destiny in a limited environment for players in a dungeon. Try to move away from "story-based" or "event-driven" adventures and more toward adventures where the players feel like they have control over what happens during the game.

Dungeons often include many different kinds of challenges—combat, tactics, navigation, overcoming obstacles and traps, and more. They encourage players to pay close attention to their environment, as everything in a dungeon is a potential danger.

D&D classes, spells, magic items, and other facets of the game have been designed with dungeons in mind. Take advantage of this aspect when you're designing your dungeon. Find opportunities for the dwarf PC to notice unusual stonework (and have it matter to the adventure) or areas where only a PC's darkvision (or a *light* spell) will show the way. Make the players feel like they've "beaten" an aspect of the dungeon because they've used the rules correctly.

When in doubt for creating an adventure, use a dungeon. Use the material in the *DMG* to help. The *DMG* provides plenty of excellent dungeon-building tools, encounter charts, challenge rating gauges, and all sorts of things vital to creating adventures. Try to come up with new twists and new ways of doing things—but try to feature the rules rather than break or bend them.

Despite the exploration and combat-intensive nature of dungeons, don't neglect to include opportunities for PCs to interact with NPCs. Interaction can, and should, be a big part of dungeon adventuring. Monsters and encounters in the D&D game should be smart and challenging. As playtests have already shown, PCs are tougher and have more options now ... and the same goes for their opponents. Allow for places where PCs can use their noncombat skills and where players can demonstrate their role-playing (as opposed to "roll-playing") abilities.

by Aaron Williams

Letters (continued from page 10)

I'd like to see more high-level adventures (since they're the hardest to design) and more maps. All maps should have grids; otherwise the DM pulls his or her hair out trying to figure out where the heck the PCs are, and how big a given place is!

Paul Hoyak
ranma@escape.ca

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

I had mixed feelings about Issue #82. I like the new D&D game quite a bit and feel it is superior to previous editions. For that reason, it was great to see all of the new game material in adventures. The system really shines in monster descriptions, traps, and descriptions of towns and NPCs. All of the information necessary is right there and easy to adjudicate. The descriptions are longer, but their clarity more than makes up for it.

Unfortunately, the new format for the magazine is overall a failure. The smudges on the paper reduce readability for no good purpose, especially if the light is less than perfect (which has been known to happen during gaming). The white lettering on sidebars is also harder to read, and the textured backgrounds certainly do not help. The random black splotches on the page also seem to serve no useful purpose. In addition, for me at least, all of this visual activity on the page is ugly and distracting. I would suggest toning everything down and making the magazine as readable as possible.

The adventures were a mix of the humdrum and interesting. "Evil Unearthed" seems like a fairly standard "evil priest with undead" encounter. "Playing with Fire" was novel in that PCs could complete the adventure without doing any fighting at all. "Dark Times in Sherwood" was an excellent tie-in to the Sherwood campaign in *Dragon Magazine* #274. I would like to see more tie-ins in the future, especially to mini-campaigns in *Dragon Magazine*. "Eye for an Eye" was the best of the lot, with a great villain, interesting locale, and varied encounters. In addition, it was great to see the new dragons, even if they were only the pip-squeaks.

The "Scaling the Adventure" sidebars are excellent, especially when they suggest alternative or additional foes.

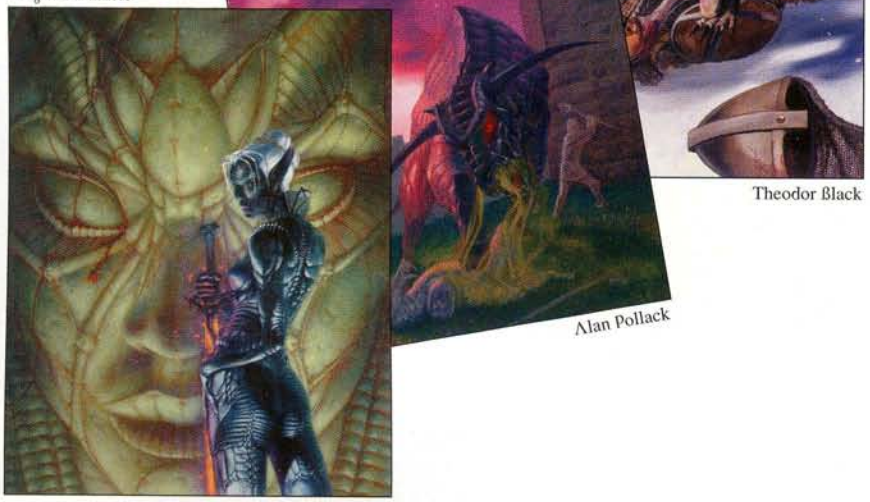
I was glad to see the new guidelines. *Dungeon Magazine* obviously put a lot of effort into them and it shows. Hopefully they will encourage many new submissions, which will only raise the quality level of the magazine.

James Landry
via email

Our latest "tie-in" with Dragon Magazine is "Alterations," Phil Athan's introductory adventure for the Greyhawk 2000 campaign setting appearing in Dragon Magazine #277. Let us know what you think of the module and the campaign setting.

The new Dungeon Magazine guidelines were created with the help of Jonathan Tweet, Bruce R. Cordell, Miranda Horner, Ed Stark, and Sean K Reynolds. Our guidelines are a somewhat streamlined version of the adventure design guidelines used by in-house roleplaying game designers. In its own way, the magazine helps the company train outside designers to use the proper "house style." You never know when Wizards of the Coast will need to hire a new game designer!

Issue #84 Preview



Stephen Daniele

Theodor Black

Alan Pollack

The Harrowing
by Monte Cook
Lolth's daughter has designs on her mother's Demonweb. A D&D adventure for 15th-level characters.

The Dying of the Light
by Chris Doyle
You have from sunrise to sunset to kill as many vampires as you can. A D&D adventure for 9th-level characters.

Dungeon of the Fire Opal
by Jonathan Tweet
Defeat the denizens of an ancient monastery to find the legendary Fire Opal. A D&D adventure for 3rd-level characters.

Armistice
by Peter Vinogradov
A sinister force threatens the peace between two duchies. A D&D adventure for 5th-level characters.

PLUS: New Maps of Mystery!

Would You Like Fries with That?

All in all, I'm quite impressed with Issue #82. Patrick Ross did a great job bringing his swamp to life in "Eye for an Eye." I was delighted to see so many creative non-combat options in his random encounter tables. (Too often I find that random encounter tables are little more than laundry lists of monsters.) I also liked the set up for "Dark Times in Sherwood" because it included both political intrigue and opportunities for action, two plot elements which are hard to combine into an effective adventure. The poster map of Nottingham Castle was nicely done and greatly appreciated.

The only thing I wasn't enthralled with was the graphical layout of the text pages. I know you guys are trying to give the pages of *Dungeon Magazine* that "ancient treasure map" feel with those dark splotches, but it looked like someone dropped a handful of greasy french fries onto my magazine. Please go back to the plain white pages; the new full color maps and illustrations (which are awesome by the way) will give *Dungeon Magazine* all the flair it needs.

I DON'T WANT GOOD ADVENTURES TO BE TOSSED ASIDE SIMPLY BECAUSE THE PLOT ISN'T BRACKETED BY STONE WALLS.

As far as the new writers' guidelines are concerned, I read the "back to the dungeon" rallying cry with mixed feelings. Although I love a good dungeon crawl as much as the next guy, I don't want good adventures to be tossed aside simply because the plot isn't bracketed by stone walls.

Many of my favorite adventures are set in cities ("Storm Season" in Issue #61), villages ("Caermoor" in Issue #2), open ocean ("Nbod's Room" in Issue #51), or vast forests ("Things That Go Bump in the Night" in Issue #38). To exclude these kind of adventures from the magazine would seriously limit the one thing that makes the D&D game unique: its creative flexibility. I stuck with D&D precisely because of its ability to go outside of the dungeons and explore the world above the twisting passages and corridors. Although there are plenty of opportunities to make exciting, dynamic and unique dungeons, I urge the editors not to stifle the inherent creativity of game by turning their backs on the outside world.

I'd like to end this letter with a plea for more Maps of Mystery and Side Treks.

Kevin Carter
Los Angeles, CA

We weren't entirely pleased with the way the "splotches" printed (they didn't look that dark on the laser proofs, honest!), so we've removed them to whiten the pages.

Although we are planning to showcase more dungeons in the pages of Dungeon Magazine, we have no plans to neglect town-based and wilderness-based scenarios. Variety, after all, has been one of the secrets of the magazine's success.

Mixed Feelings

As a 2nd-Edition player, I was worried about the arrival of the new game and the effect it would have on the magazine. While it can't be expected that *Dungeon Magazine* would use outdated rules, my PCs are 6th level (and I hope to get them to 20th level one day), and I cannot simply switch to using the new game, as it would unbalance and change the nature of the campaign. This does not mean that I cannot use *Dungeon Magazine* adventures, but my first complaint is that rather than tales of heroism and adventure, the modules in Issue #82 read more like a list of skill checks and difficulty checks. Boring. I like the outcome to rely on the thinking of my players, not their fortunate or unfortunate choice of skills.

Second, I want to complain about "Dark Times in Sherwood." What possessed you to publish this? The plot (an evil wizard who wants to take over the city) is hardly inspired, and how many campaigns are set in Sherwood Forest? Change the names to fantasy names and it is just a generic adventure with nothing really to recommend it—easy for any DM to write. However, this Robin Hood tale was not as poor as "Evil Unearthed," where a deranged cleric commits deranged acts for no other reason than to be evil. In your guidelines you say not to have PCs "battle a deranged wizard or sorcerer." I guess it is okay if it's a cleric! "Playing with Fire" had a nice background, but there was no substantial plot. You have a key; go explore a dangerous place and get the treasure from it. The only real reason I can see for using this is if the PCs somehow awaken the Fire Lord and he becomes a campaign villain.

The one saving grace of the issue was "Eye for an Eye." This adventure had an intriguing villain, cunning plot, investigative work, plenty of Side Trek potential, and excellent moral decisions. No good PC should be awarded experience if they simply hack apart the *charmed* guards—a lesson for those who think with their blades. The characters were excellent, and Thornfur was an especially nice touch. Even if I do not use the whole adventure, I might slot him into my own campaign as a forest's guardian. A quality adventure! I am a big fan of villains who are not combative in nature.

My only other major concern were the dull settings. All four adventures were set in bland, rural woodland areas. I think that *Dungeon Magazine* ought to publish adventures that would take a lot of work for a DM to make himself, and any DM can write wilderness adventures. High mountains, freezing tundras, hot deserts, and twisted, magical landscapes would be much more interesting than yet another forest. How many forest villages can be threatened by a mad individual?

Higher level adventures would be nice, perhaps with a town to save rather than a village, or maybe adventures where the people you protect are not just common folk—royalty, a family of fairy dragons, maybe a priceless silver dragon egg.

Edd McDonald
via email

We hope that you find this issue's selection of adventures more to your liking. "Deep Freeze" combines interesting locations with inspiration from H.P. Lovecraft stories to create a memorable roleplaying experience. "Iriandel" boasts an intriguing plot and a nice mix of wilderness- and dungeon-based encounters. "Depths of Rage" might seem like a simple exercise in goblin-bashing, but there are a few unusual twists to keep the characters on their toes. "Alterations" is unlike anything we've published before and might make a fascinating alternate-reality adventure to surprise your dungeon-weary D&D players.

I would love to see more adventures set in unusual environments and climates. However, prospective authors should keep in mind the modules we've already published. A module set in the

cold tundra is fine, but we're not looking for another "Mertylmane's Road" (Issue #76) or "Deep Freeze" (in this issue).

Check out pages 96-97 for our newest Maps of Mystery. Although we have additional Maps of Mystery and Side Treks slated for future issues, we could use a few more. If you have an awesome map or Side Trek adventure, get a copy of our submission guidelines and send it in!

Please, Please, Please!

I've been following you're magazine for many years, and I must say this latest upgrade (Issue #82) was truly impressive. Beautiful graphics, much deeper content (I really like the roleplaying tips for each NPC), and full color! Wow. I also like the fact that you are going the more generic, easy-to-drop-in-to-any-campaign route. You guys are finally realizing the full potential of the magazine and the hobby at large. Congrats.

YOU GUYS ARE FINALLY REALIZING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE MAGAZINE AND THE HOBBY AT LARGE. CONGRATS.

What *really* took my breath away was the poster map of Nottingham Castle. You see, I've been looking for the ideal castle to drop into my campaign for months. However, my elation was nearly matched by my disappointment that more of the castle interior wasn't shown. I buy the magazine because I don't have the time to develop these detailed maps myself. You make it easier by providing this great external view and a few key interiors (which were wonderfully done, by the way), but why not go all the way and show the layout for all the structures?

Please, please, please finish what you started! This would be a great way to drive traffic to your web site. Just have the artist finish the castle detail and serialize the drawings on the web, say, one per week. Alternately, publish it in a future issue or as part of another Sherwood campaign module. Just publish it!

I'll hold my breath. You guys keep up the great work.

Malcolm Wolter
Houston, TX

Under Construction

Just some quick feedback to Tommy Smekens "Exploring the Underhalls" letter in Issue #82. His idea of short dungeon settings that can be placed into most dungeons is brilliant. Side Treks are usually outdoor adventures, so what is really needed are Side Treks for dungeon settings. This reminds me of the old "Under Construction" feature in early *Polyhedron Newszines*. Just a section of a dungeon or even a room is outlined, and this section could be put into most dungeon settings. After all, the name of your magazine is *Dungeon*, so a few, small dungeon sections that could be placed into any generic dungeon would be a great resource for all DMs.

William K. McCarthy
via email

We couldn't agree more, William. I'll tell you what: If we receive enough excellent submissions, we'll introduce this new feature to the magazine and run it as often as we can. Now, let's start seeing some awesome mini-dungeons, and keep the length to 2,000 words or fewer per submission.

Room for Improvement

I've subscribed to *Dungeon Magazine* since its inception and have always appreciated the simplicity and clarity of its layout and graphic design. (I somehow endured the dark times when the contents page was laid out like a dungeon floorplan.) When I first browsed through Issue #82, I recoiled in distaste but gave myself some time to overcome nostalgia for the familiar. After several weeks, however, the changes still disappoint. Some specific points:

The "kicker" description of each module is no longer clearly distinguished from the title. The old design, with the title in caps, the kicker in a smaller, lower-case script, and the author's name in between, conveyed the information more efficiently and flexibly. The kicker will now likely have to be shorter than the main title to keep the "look" of the text balanced, which diminishes the kicker's utility. The kicker should either be discarded altogether (which would be a shame, and a loss of a good space for droll editorial commentary), or some design closer to the old layout should be adopted.

The horizontal black borders on each page needlessly crowd the text and darken the overall color scheme of every page. They also reduce useful margin space for handwritten notes by DMs running modules. Please remove at least the top border, which doesn't offset information like the bottom border does.

The white-text-on-dark-color boxes are alright, but too many of them muddle the layout. For example, "Playing with Fire" is a short, sweet adventure. Six sidebars, however, is too many for an eight- or nine-page scenario.

Workmanlike black-and-white illustrations beat hasty color illustrations any day. The illustrations in Issue #81 were more plentiful and, for the most part, of better quality than those in Issue #82. Color illustrations should not be muddy. Unfortunately, only Carl Critchlow's fine art avoided that. The use of color to differentiate each module, however, is very welcome.

While I appreciate the need for change heralding the switch to color and the 3rd-edition format, the new *Dungeon Magazine* is visually unrecognizable and just too busy. There is something important about visual continuity in a magazine, and I think the continuity which should be emphasized is that of the clean, readable "crispness" of the old *Dungeon Magazine*, which itself hearkened back to the classic TSR modules and their clear white pages, sans serif fonts, and bold line-ink illustrations. Change is good only if it is for the better.

The content of the magazine, fortunately, remains excellent. Thank you for your time.

Michael Rooney
Pasadena, CA

Thank You!

I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate and enjoy your magazine. I rarely use a pregenerated adventure from start to finish, but I use bits and pieces from different adventures or use them to inspire me. Sometimes I do find an adventure so good I use it "as is."

When I first picked up Issue #80 and read "Fortune Favors the Dead," I thought it looked dumb. It certainly wasn't the high fantasy game I was used to playing, and seemed more suited to a modern-day roleplaying game. Two things changed my mind. First, my two regular players and I decided to start a Birthright game. They decided to be Khinasi prince brothers, seeking their fortunes while they waited for the crown. Second, I picked up

Dragon Magazine #273, and we all thought how exciting and fun it would be to run a swashbuckling campaign. On the brothers' first adventure, they found one piece of Salamanca's treasure map, and they were off! The adventure fit perfectly. There were fierce duels and clever deceptions. After being horribly embarrassed by Tonja the battle-mage in the desert, I had them run into her again at the Baron's villa. One brother danced with her, exchanging witty repartee and sly innuendo, while the other brother stealthily pilfered the Baron's study.

YOUR ADVENTURES ARE OF SUCH HIGH QUALITY THAT EVEN WHEN I DON'T THINK I CAN USE THEM, I CAN USE THEM!

To make a long story short, the whole adventure rocked, and my players had a terrific time (and I got a recurring villain they love to hate in Tonja)! I changed very little of the adventure to make it work for the Birthright setting and lower level characters. I replaced some of the heavy-hitting monsters with slightly weaker ones, gave my guys bodyguards, and made the Baron a regent. Other than that, I pretty much ran it straight. So, keep up the great work! Your adventures are of such high quality that even when I don't think I can use them, I can use them!

The few sessions we've played using the 3rd-Edition rules went really smoothly; the new rules are easy to learn and easy to play. Right now it's difficult to craft adventures for the new game when we're all still learning the rules, so *Dungeon Magazine* will come in extra handy. I look forward to all the new issues!

Amber Scott
Seattle, WA

WANT TO SUBMIT AN ADVENTURE?

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Check our our new submission guidelines starting on page 98 of this issue, or read the guidelines online at our official website:
www.wizards.com/dungeon/welcome.asp

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